

Between Victim and Warrior

Political Mobilization among Sudanese Refugees in Uganda

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Cand. polit 1992

March 2006

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Abstract

This thesis explores the phenomenon of political mobilization among refugees, with a focus on refugees residing in neighbouring countries to an on-going conflict: Sudanese refugees in Uganda. Refugee mobilization is a complex issue which involves understanding refugees as both cause and consequence of conflict. Refugees can be either victims and warriors, or indeed both.

How does the international refugee regime influence political mobilization among refugees? How does the host state affect mobilization? How do factors within the exile community shape political mobilization? And how do the international refugee regime, the host state, and the exile community interact? From these main research questions, the thesis analyses political opportunity structures and the role of collective identity processes in political mobilization among refugees. Refugee mobilization is thus approached through a critical discussion of concepts from social movements theory.

Refugee mobilization is analysed in relation to three factors: the international refugee regime, the host state and the exile community itself. These are analysed separately in three different chapters; attention is also paid to the interaction among these factors and its impact on refugee mobilization.

The study is qualitative and explorative in character. The topic is approached through both secondary and primary sources. Primary sources consist of qualitative interviews and observation from three months of fieldwork among Sudanese refugees in Uganda. Secondary sources are academic literature on refugee issues and political mobilization, and reports and literature relevant for the case at hand.

The literature on refugee mobilization has tended to focus on the role of the international refugee regime and the host state, ignoring the impact of social and political processes within the exile community itself. This thesis demonstrates the importance of examining the social and political processes within the exile community itself, and how these interact with the host state and the international refugee regime. Such an approach can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

This understanding has relevance for refugee protection, for understandings of complex conflicts and for a more nuanced regional perspective on armed conflict and its resolution.

Preface

Political mobilization among refugees has proven a challenging and difficult topic from the first to the last day. The more I learnt, the more complicated it seemed. This thesis represents hours of reading, thinking, writing and rewriting, and I am grateful to many people for their time, help and inspiration.

Firstly, my deepest thanks to those Sudanese in Uganda who shared their time, thoughts and experiences with me. For reasons of confidentiality I cannot name you here, but I am very grateful for your efforts.

Many Ugandans also helped me during the fieldwork. Thanks to those researchers, NGO representatives and others who shared their knowledge and thoughts with me. Furthermore, I would like to extend special thanks to Jackson Tumwine and Edward Kirumira at the Sociology Department and Faculty of Social Sciences at Makerere University in Kampala. My institutional affiliation with Makerere provided an inspiring environment. Thanks to my flatmates Josephine and Evelyn for happy company and support; and to Moses, for our many discussions on the political history and context in Uganda, and for company during my fieldwork.

Thanks to the Department of Sociology and Human Geography, University of Oslo for supporting my fieldwork financially. NUPI provided me with a stipend and a stimulating working environment, where I could concentrate and finish the thesis. Special thanks to Stein Sundstøl Eriksen for commenting on an early draft, and to Axel Borchgrevink and Kari Karamé for including me in the department's activities. Particular thanks to Susan Høivik for guiding me through the challenges of the English language, and for polishing my sentences and making them shine brighter.

Kristian Berg Harpviken, my excellent supervisor, has taught a lot through his guidance. His questions and remarks have been challenging and inspiring, and his ability to motivate has been central. A million thanks!

Finally let me express my gratitude to all my friends and family for their unflinching support. Special thanks to Kristin and Vemund for reading and commenting on early drafts. However, I alone remain responsible for the content and any errors in this thesis.

Oslo, March 2006

Anita Haslie

List of Abbreviations

CARA	Control of Alien Refugees Act
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement (between GoS and SPLM/A)
DoR	Directorate of Refugees
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
GoS	Government of Sudan
GoU	Government of Uganda
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Service
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NIF	National Islamic Front
NRM/A	National Resistance Movement/Army
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
RDC	Resident District Commissioner
RSD	Refugee Status Determination Process
RWC	Refugee Welfare Committee
SRRA	Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
UNCST	Uganda National Council of Science and Technology
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNLA	Uganda National Liberation Army
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Forces
WFP	World Food Programme

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Introduction

Are refugees victims of conflict – or warriors in it? Refugee flows can be a crucial catalyst of conflicts, where ‘refugee-generating violence has produced violence-generating refugee flows’ (Lemarchand, 2000:5). Refugees can be both a cause and a consequence of conflict, as, in my view, they can be both warriors and victims. Logically these may seem to be two mutually exclusive categories, but reality is more complex. Humanitarian organizations usually portray refugees as politically neutral victims of war (Malkki 1995), whereas the literature on refugee mobilization has focused on ‘refugee warriors’ (Zolberg et al. 1989, Adelman 1998). Refugees are thus conceptualized as either victims or warriors, or both – victims that have become warriors. This study explores the diversity and complexity between victim and warrior, asking how political mobilization among refugees develops and is formed differently, depending on the situation. It is in the juncture between the notions of refugees as cause and as consequence that a study of political mobilization among refugees can contribute to our understanding of complex conflict situations.

Most of the literature dealing with mobilization among refugees has focused on the role of the international refugee regime and on the role of the host state (Zolberg et al. 1989, Terry 2002, Loescher 2003, Loescher and Milner 2005). The concept of an ‘international refugee regime’ refers to an international legal framework for refugee rights, and also to the policies and practices of international organizations in relation to the protection of refugees. The Geneva Refugee Convention of 1951 defines refugees as victims of persecution, with the role of international humanitarian organizations being to protect them. The possibility of participating in political activity and organization is a human right, also for refugees. In practice, however, refugees are often expected to remain neutral and their right to freedom of association is limited (Lawyers Committee for Human Rights 1995, Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005).

The role of the host state can be of importance to refugee mobilization processes. For example, many armed groups receive material and diplomatic assistance from host states, because of their role as foreign policy instruments (Zolberg et al. 1989). How the host state’s policy towards refugees may influence political mobilization among refugees will be a central question in this study.

Even though the role of the international refugee regime and the host state are essential factors in understanding political mobilization among refugees, most of the

literature has overlooked the situation within the exile community itself. This thesis seeks to understand the role of social and political processes within the exile community, and how this interacts with the international refugee regime and the host state in shaping political mobilization among refugees.

Deeper knowledge about political mobilization among refugees is important, for several reasons. Firstly, understanding mobilization processes contributes to our understanding of conflicts and why they persist. Central questions in this regard are whether refugees have a role in the prolongation of conflicts, and whether refugees can be a key to conflict resolution.

Secondly, understanding political differences and internal oppression within a refugee population challenges the customary practice of international organizations that treat them as a homogenous group when providing protection. Better knowledge about political mobilization among refugees is needed in order to improve refugee protection. For instance, it may be difficult to protect individuals fleeing oppression by the opposition group, if members of the opposition live in the same refugee settlement. Hovil and Moorehead (2002:14) give a specific example: a Sudanese refugee fleeing from oppression in an SPLA-controlled area¹ encountered his former torturer in the hospital in a refugee camp in Uganda.

Thirdly, the refugee perspective is relevant for understanding the regional dimensions of interstate conflicts. One example is the border area between Uganda and Sudan, which has been characterized by instability, insurgencies and refugee flows back and forth across the border for decades. Relations between the Government of Uganda (GoU) and the Government of Sudan (GoS) have been hostile, and both countries have experienced civil wars and insurgencies. Even though the civil wars in Southern Sudan between the GoS and the SPLA, and the war in Uganda between the GoU and the LRA² are two different conflicts, they are often more interconnected when experienced on the ground. This is especially evident through the perspective of refugees, where refugees living in these areas have experienced violence and war from all the parties involved, especially from SPLM/A, the LRA, GoU and GoS.

This study is a qualitative, explorative one aimed at gaining insights into refugee mobilization processes, while also developing theory on the issue. The research approach

¹ SPLM/A = Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army.

² LRA = Lord's Resistance Army

can be located at the intersection of what Ragin (1994) calls ‘exploring diversity’ and ‘advancing new theories’. My primary sources consist of qualitative interviews and observation from fieldwork in Uganda, February–April 2004, during which I interviewed Sudanese in Uganda who were involved with political mobilization. Both city centres and refugee settlements were visited. These primary sources constitute the most important data for the analysis, while written secondary sources are supplementary to these. Such secondary sources include academic literature on refugee issues and political mobilization, relevant reports and literature, as well as news media sources. Various sources and methods have been used, as triangulation provides the possibility of confirmation and completeness of data (Arksey and Knight 1999).

The focus of the thesis is on political mobilization among refugees in a neighbouring country of on-going conflict. Main research questions are: How does the international refugee regime influence political mobilization among refugees? How does the host state affect mobilization? How do factors within the exile community shape political mobilization? And how do the international refugee regime, the host state, and the exile community interact? On the basis of these questions, the thesis analyses political opportunity structures and the role of collective identity processes in political mobilization among refugees.

Three factors are central here: the international refugee regime, the host state, and the exile community itself. Although these three interact on the empirical level, distinguishing among them on the analytical level provides a useful typology in this study. The typology will also guide the structure of the analysis, where each of the three factors is discussed in separate chapters (3, 4, and 5) and the interactions among these factors are discussed in a fourth chapter (chapter 6).

1) Theoretical Framing of Refugee Mobilization

This thesis focuses on understanding political mobilization among refugees in a neighbouring country to an on-going conflict. In line with this focus I seek to understand the forms that political mobilization can take, through an analysis of the influence of three factors: the international refugee regime, the host state and the exile community, as presented in the introduction. In terms of theory, particular attention will be paid to the role of political institutions and collective identity processes in the analysis of political mobilization. This chapter presents contributions from sociological literature that are useful in understanding this phenomenon, as well as concepts that will be used in the analysis of the empirical findings. Central here are the concept of ‘political opportunity structure’ and theories of ‘collective identity’.

The concept of political opportunity structure enables an analysis of the political context in which mobilization takes shape, and also how political institutions and authorities influence the mobilization processes. Theories of collective identity facilitate an analysis of how social and political processes among a given population influence mobilization.

Most sociological literature within this field has emerged from studies on social movements in the Western world, especially social movements within Westphalian nation-states. This study, however, concerns political mobilization within African states and in a situation marked by guerrilla warfare. This is a different context, and one which requires sensitivity towards the Western bias of the theory – especially in relation to the assumption about a clear-cut division between state and society. The greatest challenge, however, is to relate the theory to the actual refugee situation, where the host state constitutes the ‘political opportunity structure’, in place of a theory about political mobilization within a state.

The conceptual framework presented in this chapter is one against which I want to discuss my findings, using theory as a way of viewing the situation from a certain perspective, and building on knowledge about political mobilization from other localities. I am not seeking a sociological theory that fits exactly with my findings, but I seek abstract concepts that can enable a fruitful discussion of my understanding of social reality. In other words, I present concepts from sociological literature which I find useful for my analysis; they are not assertive explanations of my findings or mathematical equations. Rather they

are like binoculars sharpening some figures in the landscape, or a radio tuning more clearly into certain frequencies.

Before going into discussions on Political Opportunity Structure and Collective Identity, let us have a look at some issues from the literature on refugee mobilization.

Refugee Mobilization

Most literature on refugee mobilization has focused on militarized refugees. This was first conceptualized by Zolberg et al. (1986) through the notion of ‘Refugee-Warrior Communities’. In *Escape from Violence* (1989) ‘Refugee Warrior Community’ was defined as:

(..)not merely a passive group of dependent refugees but represent highly conscious refugee communities with a political leadership structure and armed sections engaged in warfare for a political objective, be it to recapture the homeland, change the regime, or secure a separate state. (Zolberg et al. 1989:275).

The concept of ‘Refugee Warrior Community’ emerged out of a study concerned with the emergence of an international refugee regime, the ideology of democratic nationalism³ and a focus on the armed aspect of the phenomenon, rather than an analysis of mobilization processes itself. Refugee warriors are also referred to as being used as foreign policy instruments by their external supporters (Zolberg et al. 1986:166; 1989:277). However, it has also been argued that if the refugee warriors fight on behalf of the host state, they are not true refugee warriors, but actors in an interstate war (Adelman 1998:50). In practice, this distinction can be hard to draw.

Furthermore, Adelman has argued that Refugee Warriors are a phenomenon that exists due to the failure of international community to provide alternatives for refugees and due to support from neighbouring countries:

Refugee warriors are more a product of international political and military relations, as well as the misuse of humanitarian aid, than the internal conflicts or the legitimacy crisis which produced the refugees in the first place. (Adelman 1998:52)

Adelman (1998) disagrees with the assumption of Zolberg et al. (1989) about the link between refugee warriors and ‘root causes’ (the reason why they fled in the first place),

arguing instead that the situation in exile is decisive for whether refugees become refugee warriors. He thus makes a distinction between internal conflicts and ‘root causes’ on the one hand, and international and regional factors on the other, and then chooses the latter as an explanation for refugee warriors. Adelman’s argument needs to be modified, however.⁴ Also Zolberg et al. (1989) are concerned about root causes, but primarily in relation to refugee protection and the escape from violence. When specifically addressing the issue of refugee warrior communities, they also emphasize the role of the international community and regional states.

In line with Adelman’s attention towards the exile situation, a recent study centres on the control that rebel groups seek to have over the refugee population. Stedman and Tanner focus on warring groups as manipulators of refugees, emphasizing that rebel groups need to control the refugee population in order to claim legitimacy as alternative states (Stedman and Tanner 2003:9). This is in line with the argument of democratic nationalism. However, the relationship between rebel groups and refugees is not explored in the study, but is assumed to be one of manipulation. A distinction is thus made between refugees as victims on the one hand, and as warriors on the other. The underlying assumption is that refugees are passive victims of the manipulation of militias, host governments and geopolitical powers. By reducing refugees to being victims of power abuse, rather than actors in a complex political reality, Stedman and Tanner’s study overlooks complex political and social processes within the exile community. My point is not an argument for portraying all civilians as accomplices to rebels, but rather that, by understanding the complexity of mobilization processes, we might find better solutions.

Most of the literature concerning refugee mobilization has focused on the role of the international refugee regime and the host state, with particular attention to the refugee camp as an institution that may foster the emergence of refugee warriors. These issues are certainly important and valuable to our understanding of the phenomenon, and will be further discussed in the analysis. However, this study will also emphasize other factors, arguing that the influence of the refugee regime and the host state is not sufficient to understand the phenomenon. In this study, I will look into the influence of the exile

³ The argument is that the ideology of democratic nationalism entails that insurgent groups need a civilian population that can legitimize the political claims of such groups (Zolberg et al. 1989:277).

⁴ This also applies to Stedman and Tanner’s (2003) reading of Zolberg et al., where they argue ‘In their view, refugee warriors are symptomatic of a political and economic crisis stemming from globalization, wherein the root causes of economic inequality and political repression have radicalized political opponents, prompting them to flee to retake their homeland.’ (Stedman and Tanner 2003:6).

community in refugee mobilization, exploring the phenomenon of refugee mobilization in a broader sense than previous studies on refugee warrior communities have done.

Political versus Military Mobilization

One reason for the need of a broader concept is that the Refugee Warrior concept can lead to a focus too much concerned with the military aspects of refugee mobilization, overshadowing the complex political context. This study aims at exploring the context in which refugees mobilize, and at understanding their position within the refugee community. The label ‘Refugee Warrior Community’ often fails to take into account other types of political organizations, at times even reducing all political activity among refugees to the sphere of warfare, weapons and violence. A definition of refugees as warriors might legitimize exercising power over the group. For example, the authorities may justify keeping refugees in camps on the grounds that it is necessary to control these people. An increased focus on refugees as a threat means that refugee issues risk being reduced to a military and security question.

Militarization of refugee communities is a huge problem for humanitarian actors, posing a dilemma between how to provide protection and deliver aid, while at the same time preserving neutrality. The UNHCR has developed a response to deal with militarization of refugee camps, known as the ‘ladder of options’. The first step includes preventive measures and cooperation with national law-enforcement authorities; the second step involves deployment of civilian or police monitors; and only in the last option is there military deployment. (Loescher and Milner 2005:68). The UNHCR’s responses are based on police and/or military forces, rather than seeking political solutions. This development might in the long run undermine the protection- and human rights focus of refugee policy. A solution to the problem of militarized refugee communities will also need to include respect for the right of refugees to political association, and their human rights in general.

As this discussion shows, the difference between political and military mobilization is not clear. In international law, refugees do not have the right to protection if they are involved in military activities. Soldiers are normally not entitled to refugee status, as refugee protection means protection of civilians and victims of war. The term ‘refugee warrior’ is therefore in this sense an impossibility, a contradiction in terms. But in social reality, the distinction between political and military is complex, and mobilization take place within a multifaceted social and political context. It is beyond the scope of this thesis

to enter into a deeper legal discussion of refugee protection in relation to political and military mobilization. Instead, the focus will be on exploring and understanding the variation in, as well as the interaction between, political and military mobilization.

There are incidents of political mobilization that are not military, and there are incidents of military mobilization that are not political. One example of non-political military mobilization is forced recruitment, where refugees are kidnapped and forced to fight. Another example could be recruits who are mobilized only for employment, in other words varying degrees of professional soldiers and mercenaries. On the other hand, this might not be so clear-cut either, as people may choose to become soldiers because of a situation of unemployment and insecurity, which in turn might be due to political circumstances. In other words, the ‘root cause’ of military mobilization may be political even if the motivation of the individual soldier is not. I am not arguing that military mobilization is actually political, but that if military mobilization has political causes, then the response and solution to it should be political, and not only military.

Political mobilization that also involves military engagement may take various forms and evolve differently. Understanding how and why political mobilization becomes militarized requires an understanding of the general political context. Another factor is that the difference between a movement’s political and armed wings may be blurred in practice. The question of the tension between military and political mobilization will not be solved in the thesis, but further discussed and explored. I have chosen to use the concepts ‘refugee mobilization’ and ‘political mobilization’, rather than ‘refugee warrior’ or ‘military mobilization’, in order to incorporate the tension between military and political mobilization in the concept.

Political Opportunity Structures

A central research question here is how governments and authorities create opportunities and constraints for political mobilization. ‘Political opportunity structure’ is a useful concept for analysing the political context in which political mobilization takes place. Political opportunity structure is employed within the social movement literature concerned with the political and institutional context in which collective mobilization takes place. The relationship between the state and social movements is a central topic, usually studied through the interaction between actors representing the state and actors

representing a social movement or some form of opposition to the state. Social movements can be understood as political or social collective action constituted independently of the state: they can be based on elite or on popular segments of the population, and they may be class- or community-based, and organized or unorganized (Mamdani and Wamba-dia-Wamba 1995:6).

As a concept, political opportunity structure seeks to grasp the relationship between a political regime and its challengers. Understanding the political context in which political mobilization takes place and social movements are formed is important for understanding how they develop and are shaped. Social movements are influenced by the political context in which they operate – ‘permeated by the political culture of the systems in which they develop’ (della Porta and Diani 1999:200). Analysing the political context and identifying opportunities and constraints for political mobilization will therefore be a central topic in this thesis. Important questions in this regard are the authorities’ responses to opposition, the degree of openness and inclusion or repression and exclusion towards opposition, and how these responses influence political mobilization.

In understanding political opportunity structures, della Porta and Diani also refer to the interaction between actors but emphasize the institution rather than the authorities: ‘(...) the concept of political opportunity structure has become central to interpretations of interaction between institutional and non-institutional actors’ (della Porta and Diani 1999:195). This thesis will focus on the role of political authorities, to analyse opportunities and constraints. These authorities do not necessarily represent formal institutions as such. There is a whole body of scholarly literature that discusses the strengths and weaknesses of African states, where a common argument is that the African state is weak whereas the authorities or the regimes are strong (see Bøås and Dokken 2002). In analysing political opportunity structures for Sudanese refugees in Uganda, I will look into the role of institutions and actors directly involved with refugees, but not analyse the whole of the Ugandan state as such. I will, however, analyse the role of the political authorities in relation to Sudanese refugees and to Sudan, especially the international refugee regime and the host state.

Normally, the concept of political opportunity structure explains how the very same structure against which one mobilizes can provide constraints and opportunities for this mobilization. In the case of refugees, however, this is very different. Refugees mobilize in order to change the situation in their country of origin, but this mobilization takes place within another state. The political authorities that shape the constraints and opportunities

will therefore not be identical with those of the particular state against which the refugees are mobilizing. This study explores the opportunities and constraints for political mobilization among refugees by using the concept of political opportunity structure, with the main authorities in relation to the refugees being the host state and the international refugee regime. This will necessitate some slight modifications, but the core understanding of the concept as a way of analysing the influence of the political context on mobilization will remain central.

Much of the literature on social movement and political mobilization operates with an underlying assumption about the distinction between the state and civil society. Mamdani (1995b) has criticized this element in studies on Africa, pointing out that such a distinction cannot be easily made in the African context. He argues that social movements and opposition in Africa should instead be understood in a broad perspective, and not assumed to be internally consistent and coherent (Mamdani 1995b). Consequently, it is important not only to study the relationship between movements and states, but also to take into consideration relations between and among different social movements, and relations within movements. In this study, the SPLM/A will figure both as a movement in relation to authorities like the Government of Uganda (the host state), and supranational institutions like the UNHCR (the international refugee regime). However, the SPLM/A also represents a political authority – both within the exile community, and in controlling and administering territories in southern Sudan.

Tarrow (1998) argues that people are mobilized when political opportunities and constraints change, and he focuses on cycles of contention⁵ in understanding political mobilization. He defines political opportunities and constraints by drawing on Tilly's (1978) analysis of mobilization, which emphasized insurgent opportunities and threat, and facilitation and repression on the part of the authorities. Tarrow, however, places greater emphasis on actor influence than on the structures.

(...) the term 'political opportunity structure' should not be understood as an invariant model inevitably producing social movements, but as a set of clues for when contentious politics will emerge, setting in motion a chain of causation that may ultimately lead to sustained interaction with authorities and hence to social movements. (Tarrow 1998:20)

⁵ 'Cycles of contention' describes the dynamics when opportunities for collective action is widening, creating opportunities for several different groups to join the protests as well, not only those who started it. The most extreme end of a cycle of contention is revolution (Tarrow 1998:24–25).

The concept of political opportunity structures focuses on institutional and political context, but, as Tarrow points out, also these institutions are affected and influenced by actors. This thesis will therefore not only analyse the political structures, but also take into consideration the interplay between the political authorities and refugees.

In addition to emphasizing the actors' perspective in understanding political opportunity structure, Tarrow focuses on the significance of social and political changes. Opportunities for collective action emerge when there are changes and openings in the political system. These changes may not always be evident, but are rendered visible by the opposition and challengers of the authorities, thereby creating opportunities for others to mobilize (Tarrow 1998). Peace negotiations may for example represent such an opening.

Inclusion and Exclusion

There is a scale of variations of how regimes relate to social movements – from extremely open, inclusive and accommodating to closed, repressive and exclusive. Regimes that practise a strategy of inclusion will tend to be more heterogeneous and open towards opposition, whereas regimes with a strategy of exclusion towards social movements and opponents will tend to be more homogeneous and closed (della Porta and Diani 1999). These are certainly important factors in the shaping of the political opportunity structure.

Several studies have indicated that repressive policies are an important factor in understanding political mobilization. Tilly (1978), for example, classified political regimes on the basis of the degree of repression or facilitation towards opposition.⁶ The idea is that opposition is formed in relation to the responses of the authorities: the more repressive a regime's response to opposition groups, the more radicalized will they become. A study comparing German and Italian policy showed that 'harsher policing techniques tended to discourage peaceful mass protest and at the same time encourage the more radical fringes of protest.' (della Porta and Kriesi 1998:211).

There exist various means of repression, and among the most central is violence, or the threat of violence. As this thesis is concerned with a situation affected by war, the political context is very much dominated by violence. The relationship between the authorities and social movement and opposition could therefore also be understood through the distinction between violence and legitimate force. But this distinction is not always

clear, and is often subject to political disagreement: ‘(...) the precise boundary of legitimate force remains a matter of fierce dispute in all political systems’ (Tilly 2003:27). The boundary between political and military mobilization is also blurred. The use of force and violence are, in other words, political tools for the authorities. How then does this influence political opportunity structure? Governments often employ specialists in violence, ‘(...) people who control means of inflicting damage on persons and objects.’ (Tilly 2003:35). The role of these violent specialists may be significant in relation to political opportunity structures, because the latter exercise the politics of the authorities, and their manner may influence and shape political opposition. Tilly argues for instance that ‘(...) democratic civilian control over violent specialists mutes those effects. Conversely, collective violence rises to the extent that the specialists escape democratic civilian control.’ (Tilly 2003:40). It is important to understand whether violence on the part of the regime or a political authority is considered legitimate and under democratic control, and how this affects the relationship between the authorities and their opponents.

From this discussion, an important question emerges concerning the various exclusionary or inclusionary practices that the political authorities employ in relation to the population they seek to govern. These practices will be analysed by evaluating the implications of three factors: settlement, livelihood and security.

For example, settlement policy might be exclusionary if refugees are more or less forced by host states to live in camps. Especially when these camps are separated from the local population and located in remote areas, settlement policy can exclude the refugees from integration and participation in policy concerning them. Also important are the refugees’ livelihood situation, their possibilities to work and provide for food and shelter. If they are not allowed to work, this can be an exclusionary practice (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005).

Placing refugees in a situation of violence and constant security threat can be another exclusionary practice on the part of the authorities. For example, Sudanese refugees in Uganda are placed in insecure areas in the north of the country, close to the border to Sudan. Some of these areas are affected by the civil war in Uganda, and insurgents at times attack refugee camps as well. Security threats may also come from the

⁶ Skocpol (1979) looked into changes in the repressive capabilities of regimes, and della Porta (1995) studied protest policing in Western Europe, which led to a typology based on regimes range of prohibition of behaviours and groups, and the dominant logic of intervention (della Porta and Kriesi 1999:210).

other side of a border, as when refugee camps are attacked by neighbouring states. Examples of this include the Rwandan attack on refugee camps in Zaire, and the ‘hot pursuit’ raids of Myanmar government forces across the border to Thailand (Jacobsen 2002).

Focusing on the institutional and political context in which political mobilization among refugees takes place is important in order to understand the dynamics of how and when mobilization develops and is formed. Political and institutional structures and processes can both hinder and facilitate political mobilization, and political mobilization can influence responses from the authorities, thereby shaping political structures. This thesis explores the relationship between the institutional and political structures which form the refugees’ situation, and inquires into the relationship between political mobilization among refugees and these political institutions.

The political opportunity structure approach has been criticized for not taking into consideration that many social movements have developed within a political context and in a climate of cultural innovation at the same time (Melucci 1984, referred to in della Porta and Diani 1999: 10). Political opportunity structures can provide a tool for understanding how mobilization develops and is formed in relation to the political context, but the concept has limitations when it comes to explaining how people form associations differently, and how change and innovation are accommodated. This is where theories of collective identity can provide useful insights.

Collective Identity

This study aims at exploring the role of collective identity in political mobilization processes, and thereby scrutinizing the relationship between identity and politics. Collective identity processes can influence political struggles, and political struggles can be rendered visible through collective identity processes. The analysis of social cleavages within the Sudanese exile community shows how collective identity can be used either to mobilize people politically, or as resistance against mobilization.

One important research question therefore relates to how collective identities become significant in refugee mobilization. A question following from this concerns multiple identities and how certain identities are activated, and not others, in mobilization processes. How organizations try to accommodate different and oppositional identities will

also be a central topic. But before addressing these questions, we need to define the concept of ‘collective identity’.

Poletta and Jasper (2001) present a broad definition of collective identity:

(...) an individual’s cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution. It is a perception of a shared status or relation, which may be imagined rather than experienced directly, and it is distinct from personal identities, although it may form part of a personal identity. (Poletta and Jasper 2001:285)

Through shared knowledge and definitions of some parts of social reality, collective identity is an individual’s link to a community. But what is the link between collective identity and political mobilization? Simply defining oneself as a part of a community does not imply political action, although it might be a useful prerequisite for collective political action. Collective identities can often be political in the sense of facilitating claim making, as one can claim something on behalf of a collective group. But, and perhaps most importantly, collective identities play an important role in political struggles: the authorities often define different political identities as either legitimate or illegitimate, recognized or unrecognized (Tilly 2003:32). Political identities are collective, public struggles that affect power relations, and ‘identity politics’ involves demanding recognition and legitimacy. When a collective sets forth a claim of recognition and legitimacy, they are also directly or indirectly demanding an answer from the authorities or other groups and organizations (Calhoun 1994:21). This is also an arena where political rights enter the political life, through the struggles for recognition (Tilly 2003:33).

In this sense, collective identities play an important role in political mobilization. They provide possibilities for identifying and pursuing political claims, and in so doing, shape political struggles. Seeing how collective identity influences political mobilization among refugees is an important task in this thesis, and the focus will be on how collective identities influence political mobilization within the Sudanese exile community.

Although we need to distinguish between collective and individual identity, we must also recall that collective identity is linked to a personal identity. It is important for people to be able to identify with the collective identity on the personal level, thereby justifying their own decision to participate in collective action (or not). Thus, the collective identity of a movement should not only address the social group on the collective level, but also ‘link the individual sphere with that of collective experience’ (della Porta and Diani 1999:73). This does not mean that the construction of collective identity should be reduced

to an individual psychological phenomenon: it should rather be understood through relational and social processes. Collective identities have the potential to reach beyond concrete personal relations between people. 'To identify with a movement also means to have feelings of solidarity towards people with whom one is not, in most cases, linked by direct personal contacts' (della Porta and Diani 1999:88). Collective identity can include persons well beyond a concrete network of people who interact regularly, and is therefore potentially a force for a wider political mobilization.

Multiple Identities

Every individual has several identities that can be activated in different contexts and that can form the basis of a collective identity. These personal identities may relate to ethnicity, class, occupation, religion, sex, regional belonging, age and so forth. Which these become important politically will vary with the situation and the place. Moreover, people may operate with several different identities at the same time. Calhoun (1994) argues that multiple identities are not organized hierarchically within a person, with one identity integrating all the others; instead, in his view, they are organized polycentrically. Although one person may identify with several collective identities, various factors can promote one identity more than another. In a certain context, one identity might be rendered more salient for the person than another. Secondly, if several identities coincide in one situation, the collective identity will grow stronger.

In a refugee context, access to resources or land might follow more easily from one certain collective identity than another. Also a collective identity based on being victims of certain policies might be important in relation to the demand for protection and aid. In Malkki's study (1995), the camp refugees focused on their Hutu identity as victims of Tutsi political authority in Burundi, and used this in their formulation of political claims in exile. Their Hutu identity was further reinforced by other overlapping identities within the community, as farmers and as refugees. In this study we need to explore how and when different identities are rendered salient.

If collective identity can explain political mobilization, it might also explain why people do *not* become involved in situations where they feel that the movement does not represent them. 'If identities play a critical role in mobilizing and sustaining participation, they also help explain people's exodus from a movement' (Polletta and Jasper 2001:292). This depends on how the construction of collective identity develops, and whether they feel that the leadership that claims to represent the members actually does so. Exodus or

resistance to mobilization may also result from the emergence of alternative, challenging groups based on other identities.

A challenge for movements in their construction of a collective identity is to manage differences within the target group: ‘(...) sustaining participants’ commitment over time requires ritualized reassertions of collective identity and efforts to manage without suppressing, difference.’ (Polletta and Jasper 2001:292). Managing differences and the inclusion of different identities in crafting a movement’s common collective identity may prove important in relation to the question of a movement’s accountability and internal democracy, which again can influence its support and ability to mobilize. In this sense, the crafting of a common identity implies preferring one common identity at the expense of others, and using this common identity as a basis for the collective. Hence, collective identity processes can be understood as a process of forming ‘groupness’. This also demonstrates that collective identities are not always internally consistent (Calhoun 1994), and that they can always be challenged and reformed. Political struggles within a group or movement can become visible through the struggle over collective identities. The outcome of the struggle defines who is to be included and who excluded from the collective identity. In other words, collective identity processes can involve processes of inclusion and exclusion, of playing down some identities while privileging other ones.

Theories on the role of collective identity in social movements have focused on such important questions as how interests emerge, the motivations to act, the strategy choices and cultural effects of movements (Polletta and Jasper 2001:284). But other important questions have been accorded too little attention within this literature; one of them is to which degree collective identity has been constructed within the given social movement, or has already existed previously (ibid: 285). For example, ethnic group divisions existed in Sudan before the formation of SPLM/A, but distinctions between the different ethnic groups are continuously changing through history, and with SPLM/A divisions have shifted over time. To which degree collective identity has been constructed within the movement is a question that should be answered empirically and understood in the context of particular settings.

One central study concerning collective identity among refugees is Liisa Malkki’s *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (1995), a study of Hutu refugees who fled the massacre in 1972 in Burundi. Her anthropological fieldwork was carried out in the town of Kigoma and in Mishamo Refugee Camp, comparing town refugees with camp refugees. The study reveals the formation of a

political collective through the construction of a collective identity in the Mishamo refugee camp. This collective identity was based upon a purified ‘Hutu-ness’, and a shared categorization of ‘the other’ was important for the creation of this ‘pure’ Hutu-ness. The making of ‘us’ and ‘them’ was crucial for the shared knowledge consolidating the collective identity. Malkki’s study focuses on the links between identity construction and political struggle. This linkage will also be central in this thesis.

One problem with Malkki’s study, however, is that her way of conceptualizing collective identity leaves little space for multiple identities within the individual. She writes for example ‘In the Mishamo refugee camp, one’s self-identification was always made in reference to the larger collectivity of “a people” in exile’ (Malkki 1995:156). This suggests scarcely any difference between the individual and the collectivity, which in turn entails conceptualizing refugees in the camp as a static and homogenous collective. Furthermore, internal power relations are invisible in Malkki’s study, leaving open the question of whether the definition of the collective identity was the elite’s definition, or that of the actual community. The present study will try to analyse collective identity as dynamic and relational, acknowledging that multiple identities are also relevant.

Ethnic Mobilization

Ethnicity is a central social category in Sudan (Tvedt 1994). Ethnicity can also form the basis for collective identity and political demands. This study does not conceptualize ethnicity as a fixed human trait. Instead, the starting point will be how ethnicity is employed politically – specifically, how it is used in political mobilization among refugees. Ethnic mobilization emerged as an important theme from my fieldwork, and will therefore be a central topic in the analysis.

It is common to distinguish ethnic mobilization from ethnic solidarity (Olzak, 1983:357). Ethnic mobilization implies not only that people feel that they have something in common that they can identify with, it also implies collective, political action. The anthropologist Fredrik Barth (1969) saw ethnic mobilization in terms of boundary activation. According to this understanding, boundaries are socially attributed, and represent a significant marker between groups. Boundaries sharpen distinctions between in-group and out-group. Boundaries and identity are thus related concepts. Furthermore, Barth noted situations in which ethnic mobilization is stronger because of other overlapping identities, as for example class or religion. The Burundian refugees in Tanzania mobilizing as Hutu, their ethnic identity, also focused on their identity as farmers

(Malkki, 1993). Being Hutu and being a farmer were overlapping identities that served to reinforce the common collective identity.

But why does ethnic mobilization occur? Competitive models of ethnic mobilization maintain that competition over social, economic or political resources can lead to ethnic mobilization. In this perspective, ethnicity is defined situationally and socially rather than essentialistically, and the individual agent might choose rationally whether to actively engage in the group or not (Olzak 1983:361). But in certain contexts, if the ethnic boundaries are strong, it might be difficult for an individual not to be identified ethnically, even though he or she prefers not to. Still, active participation is chosen, though in a political and social context. This study will not specifically address participants' motivation and individual choices, but understanding the social and political context in which ethnic mobilization occurs will be important. The distribution of and competition over resources might be a relevant topic in this respect.

Theories of competitive ethnic mobilization have linked modernization processes to ethnic mobilization (Olzak 1983:363). In this perspective, ethnic mobilization can be understood in light of institutional and political structures, and changes within those. Thus there exists a linkage between ethnic mobilization and social change. One example of a modernization process is when urban environments bring together formerly isolated groups, and ethnicity becomes more salient to social interaction and political behaviour in this new setting (Olzak 1983:367). A common feature of a refugee situation is that groups that used to live separately find themselves forced to learn to live together in refugee camps. This might activate ethnic boundaries. An important question to pose in this study is therefore whether – or under which conditions– refugee institutions activate ethnic boundaries, as opposed to other forms of collective identity.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has outlined the central discussions in the literature on refugee mobilization. This literature can provide important contributions towards understanding the role of the international refugee regime and the host state, but it lacks an analysis of the role of the exile community. In addition, this thesis will explore the tension between military and political mobilization. The chapter has also established a theoretical framework for our

analyses, through contributions from the sociological literature on social movements, focusing on political opportunity structure and collective identity.

Political opportunity structure draws attention to the political and institutional context in which mobilization takes place. The concept of political opportunity structure will be used to analyse the role of refugee institutions in influencing political mobilization among refugees, with special attention to the relationship between actors representing these institutions and the authorities, and the refugees themselves. The focus will be on how these relationships shape possibilities or obstacles for political mobilization among refugees. Central to understanding the dynamics of opportunities and constraints is the question of identifying inclusionary or exclusionary practices.

Theories of collective identity are highly relevant to the analysis as they direct attention to the importance for individuals of identifying with a larger group of people, and the implications for political mobilization. Collective identity can provide possibilities for groups to gain political influence through collective claim making. Different collective identities might therefore reflect political cleavages in society. How collective identity influences political mobilization among refugees will be an important question in the analysis, as will finding what form of collective identity becomes dominant, and why. For these reasons, ethnic mobilization will be discussed in greater detail.

Finally, a challenging task will be to analyse the interaction between political opportunity structure and collective identity, asking whether this will result in a more comprehensive understanding of political mobilization.

2) Methods; A Qualitative Study

This chapter explains the choice of qualitative methods in this study and describes the distinctive character of qualitative methods. I present the data-collection process with a focus on the fieldwork in Uganda, and then comment on the analysis of the data.

What is qualitative research? The aim of qualitative research is to understand the qualities of a phenomenon – as opposed to quantitative research, which aims at measuring the amounts of various qualities or traits (Widerberg 2001). A quantitative approach to political mobilization among refugees might focus on the size and frequency of the phenomenon,⁷ whereas this study focuses on how refugees mobilize in different settings and in relation to different actors. Quantitative and qualitative research thus involve different kinds of research questions (Widerberg 2001). I wanted to gain a comprehensive understanding of a complex situation, in an open explorative manner. This is why qualitative methods were chosen as the most appropriate for this study.

Validity and reliability are important criteria for quantitative research, in the sense that meticulous measures produce replicable data. Due to the nature of qualitative research, that approach does not produce data that are replicable in the same sense, but the data can be assessed according to an expanded notion of validity related to knowledge statements that are trustworthy (Kvale 1997). To strengthen the credibility of the study, the researcher should thoroughly account for the methodological choices made during the study. With interviews, the relation between the researcher and the interviewees should be scrutinized and discussed, as this relation can affect the results (Thagaard 1998). In the following I will therefore aim at giving an honest and thorough account of the data collection and analysis.

Data Collection: Literature and Fieldwork

The most important data in this study were gathered during my fieldwork among Sudanese refugees in Uganda. These are the primary sources of this work, whereas my secondary sources are scholarly literature in the field, relevant reports from UN and other

⁷ See for example Lischer 2000.

international and national NGOs, and journalistic sources like news articles, commentaries and editorials. I have assessed the credibility of the various sources, and been careful to corroborate findings in the primary sources with different secondary sources. The use of various sources and literature in order to explore a phenomenon is called triangulation, a useful tool that provides the possibility of confirmation and completeness of data (Arksey and Knight 1999). The triangulation in this study takes as its point of departure data from the fieldwork. These primary sources constitute the basis, with the triangulation confirming and completing the analysis of these. Further, I discuss access to the field, the selection of interviewees, and the conducting of interviews. The researcher's role in the setting and ethical dilemmas will be discussed as we proceed, while specific ethical dilemmas are taken up at the end of the chapter.

Access to the Field

Fieldwork involves social interaction in order to get the information one is searching for. There can be various social, political and cultural barriers to overcome in order to get access to people, their opinions and thoughts. On the other hand, these barriers may in themselves contain information about the social setting one wishes to understand.

Arriving in Uganda, I established contact with the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Science, at Makerere University in Kampala. A colleague in Norway had conducted her studies in Uganda while affiliated to this department through institutional cooperation between Makerere and a Norwegian university. I also moved in with two Ugandan students one week after my arrival. My affiliation with Makerere enabled me to disassociate myself from Western donor organizations and to underline my position as a student. Being associated with a refugee aid organization might have affected my interviews, as the refugees might have sought to pressure for assistance. This problem did emerge, but it was easier for me to shift the conversation away from assistance topics.

Living and working in an environment with Ugandan students and scholars also enabled me to continuously discuss and develop my understanding of the general situation in the country – social, cultural and political. I had several meetings and interviews with three different Ugandan researchers who were working with refugee-related issues in Uganda, and who were familiar with the situation of the Sudanese as well as with Ugandan refugee policy. These discussions were important for my understanding of the situation. They also provided me with several contact persons within the Sudanese community, and towards the end of the fieldwork I discussed some of my main findings with them. These

persons, in addition to NGO representatives, were important key informants in my fieldwork.

I encountered both formal and informal barriers in relation to conducting the research among Sudanese in Uganda. In order to do field study in Uganda, research permission from the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) was required. The application consists of a form, an outline of the research and references, and there was a fee (200 US dollars). Because of my affiliation with Makerere, and some personal contacts, the processing of the application was completed in only a few days, while it otherwise often took around two weeks. Once the research permission had been granted, I was given a research identity card with photo, and official UNCST letters. The letters were addressed to the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) in each of the districts where I intended to do research. I therefore went to see the RDC in Kampala who signed, copied and filed my letter. I asked him why additional permission from him was needed, since I had already registered and received permission from the official authorities. He answered that it was for my own protection. He was in charge of the security of the district, and now that I had informed and received permission from him, he would ensure that I could do my job without difficulties. He also added that many people came to Uganda pretending to do research, but in reality wanted to harm the country and threaten its security.

In practice, this whole process was time-consuming and tiring, waiting at offices, getting papers and recommendations, finding new offices and so forth. After having received permission from UNCST and Kampala's RDC, I went to Inter Aid, which is the UNHCR's implementing partner in Kampala. I had an appointment with one of the officers, whom I had spoken with on the phone. But when I got there, she refused to do the interview unless I had permission from the Office of Prime Minister (OPM), Refugee Desk. In other words, I still lacked the most important permission, as the OPM is responsible for carrying out the Ugandan authorities' refugee policy. UNHCR and its implementing partners have to cooperate with the OPM. I also needed permission from the OPM to visit refugee settlements. Doing research among refugees thus required an extra layer of permission from the Ugandan authorities compared with other kind of research.

These bureaucratic barriers, although frustrating and time-consuming, were also in themselves illustrative of the host state's refugee policy. The refugee question is a politically sensitive issue. Refugees are defined as a security issue for the host state, and they need to be controlled. This is underlined in the title of Uganda's legal framework

relating to refugees: Control of National Aliens Act (CARA). Uganda's refugee policy will be further discussed in Chapter 4. The point here is that information about the political context for the refugees was reflected in barriers to access the field.

The sensitivity of the topic was also a barrier to accessing the field. Early in the process I understood that the formulation 'political mobilization among refugees' would simply create further obstacles, so I decided present my topic as the role of Sudanese refugees in relation to the on-going peace process in Sudan. Focusing on the peace process and challenges for post-conflict Sudan enabled a discussion of political debate and activity among Sudanese within a framework that was seen as positive and acceptable. I chose not to disclose the purpose of my research directly, although I was not trying to deceive anyone. This choice was made on the basis of my perceptions of the situation, and out of concern for those I was to interview. The topic as such was not directly changed, as mobilization was discussed, but the substance was shifted towards the context in which mobilization takes place, rather than, for example, the motivation behind refugee mobilization. This is reflected in the analysis, which focuses on the role of the political context (political opportunity structures) and collective identity, rather than personal motivation.

Selecting Interviewees

I had three different contact points for starting the recruitment of interviewees. Through colleagues from my refugee studies in Egypt, I contacted two researchers who were important key informants, and who also introduced me to Sudanese refugees. A second contact point was a refugee NGO working with refugees in urban and settlement areas, who introduced me to several Sudanese refugees as well as refugees of other nationalities. The third contact point was through a former employee of Norwegian People's Aid who introduced me to the SPLM/A chapter in Uganda. All these initial, but separate, contact persons again led to recruitment of new interviewees. This technique of using one informant to recruit the next one is called 'snowball' or 'chain referral' sampling, and builds upon pre-existing relations of trust (Lofland and Lofland 1995:38).

By pursuing three different 'snowballs' I tried to counter some common weaknesses of this approach. An advantage of having three different contact points for recruiting interviewees was that they did not know of each other, so the first contact person could not trace all my contacts. Another advantage was that the selection of interviewees became more diverse, which also strengthened the explorative character of the study.

I conducted interviews with eighteen primary respondents. Ten of them lived in Kampala, and the remaining eight in Adjumani town or district. I conducted interviews with seven key informants: four in Kampala and three in Adjumani. In addition there were group discussions – four in Adjumani and two in Kampala.

The primary respondents were all refugees who in one way or another were involved in organizing Sudanese in Uganda. The nature of such organizations varied in size and form, from social organizations working with micro-credit projects to political organizations like the SPLM/A. There was also considerable variation in age, with the youngest person 15 and the oldest 66 years old. It proved difficult to recruit female interviewees, and in the end, only four of the eighteen primary respondents were women. In two instances I unfortunately had to cancel interview appointments due to logistical problems and illness – and both of these instances were appointments with women whom I did not get the chance to meet again, due to time limitations. It was more difficult to recruit women, as they appeared to be more busy as well as more hesitant than the men. Had I not kept asking to interview women, I would not have had any women among the interviewees. However, women did participate in the group discussions, and I spent one day at a meeting with a women's group. Still, most of the data used in the analysis are biased towards the situation of men, and so I decided not to use gender differences as a central topic in the analysis. This is not to say that gender is not relevant in relation to mobilization – only that this study does not aim to analyse it.

Recruiting self-settled refugees as interviewees was very different from the situation in refugee camps. Sudanese may be more 'invisible' in Kampala as they can more easily blend in among Ugandans, at least if they speak English, and/or one of the northern languages, or if they have learnt a local Ugandan language. The result was that I found I needed introductions and appointments for interviews with Sudanese in Kampala. In Adjumani I simply went to settlements for Sudanese refugees, where I could start interviewing directly because Sudanese were gathered physically in one place. Thus, the recruiting process proved far more time-consuming among self-settled refugees than in settlements. On the other hand I could interview self-settled refugees several times and more confidentially, in the sense that the other people in the community did not need to know which persons were being interviewed. I spent more time in Kampala, and two of the interviewees in Adjumani were self-settled. Additionally, many of the self-settled interviewees had previously been living in camps. Thus I gained good insight into both the situation of self-settled and camp refugees. The different forms of access to self-settled and

camp refugees experienced in my fieldwork were not only a practical issue, but also reflect the differences between the two types of refugees. This distinction is also of importance in the further analysis.

Conducting Interviews

The qualitative interview is a method to bring forth people's reflections, descriptions and understandings of their lives and situation (Widerberg 2001:58). It was important for me to create a comfortable and informal atmosphere, which could encourage more detailed answers from the interviewees. I used an interview guide (see appendix I), but the order of the questions was not important and I was free to follow up on the answers given. I was also not obliged to go through all the topics. I also had a 'Fact Sheet' (appendix I) listing specific points where I wished information – matters like family, occupation, education, languages, place of birth, other places of refuge, and so forth. The interview guide proved to be too broad, especially when the answers were elaborated. And yet, it was the more detailed answers, where I was able to follow up and ask for examples and concrete experience, which proved most fruitful. I therefore focused more on the conversation and answers than on covering all the prepared topics. Thus the interviews functioned as a way of exploring the respondents' understandings, experiences and perceptions of their situation in Uganda.

Depth and time varied from interview to interview. Most primary respondents were interviewed for about an hour, and four of them were interviewed more than once. Many of the interviews in Kampala were conducted in a quiet corner in the garden at Makerere campus or in one of the cafeterias. These were discreet, neutral, and public meeting places, and it was easier to create trust in such an atmosphere. When I visited people or met someone at a meeting or seminar I would as often as possible try to arrange for a interview separately and at Makerere. In Adjumani I conducted most of the interviews in the camps. There I would ask to be able to speak with people separately, which was possible most of the time. I also conducted a few interviews on the premises of an NGO, and two interviews in the dining hall of the guesthouse where I was staying. The NGO affiliation in Adjumani proved disturbing in some of the group discussions, as the answers I got were often directed to the NGO activity and its funding. I therefore asked the representative to wait outside, or to leave the camp and come pick me up later.

The interviews were conducted in English, as the primary respondents were already defined as a resourceful group, in being involved in organizations. They all had at least

attended primary school in Uganda, and the instruction language in Uganda is English. Some group discussions were conducted in local languages, where one of my contacts would translate.

An important principle guiding my approach to interviewing and thesis writing was confidentiality, which implies that information revealing the identity of the interviewee is not made public (Thagaard 1998). I started the interviews by assuring my respondents that confidentiality would be respected. Confidentiality is important for the protection of the people being studied. In addition it is helpful in focusing the research on social, generalizable patterns rather than on personal details about the persons involved in the research (Lofland and Lofland 1995:43–44). I also ensured confidentiality in how I stored the interviews; I never kept the names together with the interviews, and the interviews were entered and saved in my computer, which was locked with a secret password and left in my lodgings. The names of interviewees were kept separately. After some while, I discovered another challenge with regard to confidentiality: some of the interviewees told their friends about the interviews. I therefore underlined the issue of confidentiality in the interviews and explained what I meant by it. For example I would explain that even though I met someone I knew that this person knew, I would not tell that I had conducted an interview, nor what was said during the interview. All the same, it was obvious that I could not control every aspect of the confidentiality issue. Luckily, most interviewees did not know each other, but some of them were acquainted, and a few saw each other regularly. In addition I have also anonymized persons and quotes in the text.

Before starting the interviews, I asked each respondent for his or her consent to take part in the study. I was also careful to point out that if I asked questions that they felt were unpleasant, too private or too sensitive, they should not feel obliged to answer. In fact, this happened in only two instances. In the one, the interviewee felt uncomfortable because there were many people at the cafeteria where we met, although nobody was sitting very close to us. Sensing his worries, I simply dropped the topic. Thus, informed consent is not an issue only in introducing the interview, but something to be kept in mind the whole time.

I chose not to tape the interviews as I perceived some of the topics to be politically sensitive. I was therefore careful to take as many notes as possible during the interviews, and always planned to write up the interviews immediately afterwards. I would either go straight home, or stay at Makerere and do the write-up in the student computer room, where I had access because of my affiliation with the Sociology Department. The

interviews were therefore quite accurate in content, although the exact phrasing and some parts have been omitted. I believe that the essential parts of the interviews have remained intact. Moreover, this study does not focus on discourse analysis, where the exact phrasing might be more important.

To sum up: confidentiality, informed consent and creation of a trusting environment were central issues in conducting interviews and in obtaining detailed and fruitful answers. Interviewing as a method proved conducive for generating knowledge about the refugees' perceptions, experiences and understandings of the situation.

Observation and Informal Conversations

Observations and informal conversations were also part of my fieldwork. I visited neighbourhoods, participated in meetings and seminars, and attended church services. Through these different settings I observed and had informal conversations with a range of people. These settings were important for recruiting interviewees, but they were also valuable in their own right, helping to shape my general understanding of the situation. I could discuss the peace process or conditions for Sudanese in Uganda, or the situation in Uganda, with different people. I made small notes on these encounters and situations. These observations and notes were more important for my general understanding, and gave me ideas which I could follow up in later in the interviews. Moreover, I could cross-check hunches and questions emerging from the interviews. Such observation therefore was important for the triangulation.

Ethical dilemmas during fieldwork

One central dilemma during the fieldwork was the issue of whether to offer money or some kind of compensation to the interviewees. I did not want to pay anyone for being interviewed, as I did not want motivation to be based on money. I therefore underlined my position as a student, and that I had no access to funds. However, in most instances I would buy drinks and something to eat, and I sometimes compensated interviewees for their transport costs, as I did not want them to have extra expenses in relation to the interview.

Still, I felt obliged to give something in return. I always ended the interview by asking whether they had any questions for me. And most people had. They would ask about news from the peace negotiations, or about my country. If they asked about funding, I said I could help to identify relevant NGOs or scholarship institutions. Thus, what I could give back was knowledge and time, not money. My insistence on the student role, and on

not giving financial assistance, might have helped to alter perceptions of me as a ‘foreign aid worker’. I believe this was true at least for most of the interviews, though in the group discussions and more random encounters, topics of assistance came up much more frequently.

Data and Analysis

Interpretation of qualitative data develops during the whole process. It begins during the preparations and literature review, continues during the fieldwork and expands during the writing up, and might therefore change along the way (Thagaard 1998). In this study I used both primary sources and secondary sources in the analysis. Primary sources, interviews and observations from the fieldwork are sometimes presented in the analysis as a retelling of the interviewees’ accounts, and sometimes as direct quotes. The quotes are based on the notes I took during interviews and directly afterwards; they are not as precise as if they had been recorded, but the content is still accurate. The primary sources provided the point of departure for the interpretation and analysis. I sat down and read through the material several times, seeking to identify ‘analytical threads’ (Widerberg 2001:120), by which I mean all the topics I found interesting in the material. Then I started grouping them together, trying to see how the various topics related to each other. The researcher may choose among a range of forms of analysis, based on different focuses such as topic, persons/portrait, patterns, discourses and more. I chose to focus on topics and social patterns by interpreting and comparing statements made by different persons, in order to understand a topic.

Analysis can be either close to the data or based on theory, but a combination of both is common in qualitative research (Widerberg 2001). Even though I used the primary data as the point of departure for my analysis, theoretical perspectives also influenced my interpretations. Having identified central topics in the primary sources, I went to social movement theory for theoretical concepts that could open up the discussions of the interpretations. Literature discussing political mobilization among refugees was also important for the interpretation. The analysis was therefore a process that entailed alternating between theory and empirical data. As explained in the introduction, this study aims at exploring the phenomenon of political mobilization among Sudanese refugees in Uganda, but also at contributing to existing theory and literature in the field. The goal of

this research can thus be located at the intersection of what Ragin (1994:41–47) calls ‘exploring diversity’ and ‘advancing new theories’. Exploring diversity implies a focus on variety, while advancing new theories means that ideas are elaborated in a new way, usually through induction, as through case studies.

Confidentiality is an important guideline also in writing up the research, as indicated above. Therefore I use pseudonyms when referring to the interviewees in the text. I also do not reveal which quotes belong to the same person, as they are referred to by different names. Official representatives are not anonymized to the same degree, however. These interviewees are not named, but the institutions they represent are. They speak as official representatives of responsible bodies such as the Ugandan government or the UNHCR, which puts them in a different category from the other interviewees.

A challenge throughout the analysis has been to open up categories, to explore the phenomenon without reifying categories uncritically. Literature within the field of refugee studies is, to a greater extent than other sub-fields within social sciences, marked by the political engagement of the researchers (Lammers 2005:2). Refugee studies therefore often seek to promote the fulfilment of refugee rights. This is one of the strengths of refugee studies, but it might also conflict with the critical notion of politics of knowledge (Lammers 2005:2). To focus on refugee rights might lead to a fixed definition of refugees as one group, with common interests and as victims. A problem in focusing on refugees as victims is to incorporate the idea that refugees can be not only passive victims but also active agents – even as perpetrators– at the same time. Throughout the analysis, a challenge for me has been to move beyond this definition, while at the same time drawing on the literature. One measure I took was the decision to talk about ‘Sudanese’ rather than ‘refugees’ in the chapter on the exile community. Thereby I tried to analyse ‘refugee’ as a legal and political label in relation to the international refugee regime and the host state – not as something all the interviewees essentially are all the time, but rather as an identity that becomes salient in certain situations. Moving beyond the victimization of refugees has also been a challenge, especially since I heard so many stories of violence, abuse and hardship that made a deep impression. Even though many of the interviewees are indeed victims, it was important to retain an analytical focus on the mobilization process, and not to use the analysis to victimize the refugees – without, however, completely discarding the notion that refugees are also victims.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has been guided by a quest for honesty and clarification regarding the many choices made throughout the research process, and how it has affected the outcome. I hope that it can contribute to strengthening the credibility of this study.

A qualitative approach was considered appropriate for this purpose, as I wanted to explore the phenomenon of political mobilization among refugees, with a focus on the role of the exile community itself. My analysis was characterized by alternating between theory and empirical data, although the primary data constituted the starting point. This has allowed the study not only to lead to conclusions with regard to the specific case, but also to contribute to existing theory within the field.

3) The International Refugee Regime

The international refugee regime includes the international legal frameworks for refugee protection and international humanitarian refugee management and policy. This chapter explores how the international refugee regime influences political mobilization among refugees. The first section discusses the international legal framework concerning refugees, while the second section focuses on refugee management and policy, with the emphasis on the latter.

The international legal framework defines refugees as victims of persecution, entitled to protection by the host state and by the international community. Here the underlying assumption is that the refugee has crossed an international border. Aside from being a framework which makes possible international protection and assistance, it contains a definition that classifies refugees as a group apart from the citizens of the country of refuge. The first section of this chapter discusses how this can influence refugee mobilization.

The intention of humanitarian aid is to provide help and support to victims of war. Although a key principle is neutrality and impartiality, humanitarian aid may in practice help to prolong a conflict (Lischer 2003, Terry 2002, Stedman and Tanner 2003, Anderson 1999). Humanitarian aid in refugee crises can exacerbate conflict (especially through providing food to combatants, sustaining and protecting their supporters); it can be a supply to the war economy, and it can give legitimacy to militants (Lischer 2003:82). Thus, the international refugee regime can influence refugee mobilization through refugee management and policies. The second section of this chapter focuses on refugee management and policy, through an analysis of four aspects: welfare distribution, settlement, the policy of ‘durable solutions’, and humanitarianism.

This chapter discusses how the international refugee regime influences refugee mobilization through the case of Sudanese refugees in Uganda, and through a discussion of findings from studies of other areas. It is appropriate to begin with a brief introduction to the setting and background for Sudanese refugees in Uganda.

Sudanese Refugees in Uganda

In 2004, when my fieldwork was carried out, there were 214,700 Sudanese refugees in Uganda, according to the UNHCR (2004:231). Sudanese thereby comprise the largest group of refugees in Uganda, which also hosts refugees from Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia, Burundi and other countries. Many Sudanese refugees have been in Uganda since the late 1980s or early 1990s (Kaiser 2005:355). The main refugee influxes were set off by the fighting that spread in Sudan after the second civil war started in 1983, where the southern-based guerrilla movement SPLM/A was formed in opposition to the Khartoum government. With the split in the SPLM/A in the early 1990s, factional fighting in South Sudan also led to major refugee flows to neighbouring countries.

Northern Uganda, where many Sudanese refugees live in settlements, has been an insecure area, where various rebel groups have operated in recent decades. Rebel groups in both Uganda and Sudan have been active on both sides of the border, making this an unstable area. Both labour and forced migration across the border have also been fairly common since the border was drawn up in the early 20th century (Merkx 2000). This international border, originally agreed upon between the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and Uganda as a British protectorate, divides what was a homogeneous area into two, cutting through economic, cultural, ethnic and family relations. Ethnic groups such as Acholi, Maadi, and Kakwa live on both side of the border. This has had implications for migration, as some refugees have been able to self-settle among their kin on the other side (Merkx 2000). Thus, cross-border relations have been important for some Ugandan refugees in South Sudan in the late 1970s and 1980s⁸ and for Sudanese refugees in Uganda now.

Northern Uganda has been marked by conflict since President Museveni seized power in 1986. The rebel group the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has terrorized, kidnapped and murdered civilians, and the conflict has resulted in 1.8 million internally displaced persons (IDPs).⁹ In Southern Sudan, IDPs also receive humanitarian assistance through the major Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS). Thus, humanitarian aid to Sudanese refugees in Uganda is only one of many humanitarian operations in the area.

⁸ See Harrell-Bond (1986) for a detailed account of refugee assistance to Ugandan refugees in South Sudan.

⁹ The LRA and the conflict in northern Uganda will be further discussed in Chapter 4 .

The LRA has been disturbing Sudanese refugees in Uganda, with the massacres in the Achol-Pii refugee camp among the most infamous incidents.¹⁰ During the time of my fieldwork, this particularly affected refugees in some parts of Adjumani district. LRA activity there had led to displacement among refugees, resulting in overcrowded schools and re-settlement in safer parts of Adjumani (UNHCR 2004). Adjumani is one of the districts that hosts the largest numbers of Sudanese refugees (see map, appendix III). Furthermore, the Ugandan government forces (UPDF) have been allowed to pursue the LRA into Southern Sudan, leading to further displacement in the region. The result has been internal displacement in Southern Sudan, and new arrivals of refugees from Sudan to Uganda (UNHCR 2004).

Both Uganda and Sudan, and especially the border area between the two, are unstable areas that have endured conflicts and unrest for decades. This is also a poor area, where infrastructure, farming and economic activities have suffered from war and civil unrest. Thus, the Sudanese refugees in Uganda live in an environment dominated by conflict and poverty, and where the international refugee regime is a central factor in their lives. The starting point for the international refugee regime is when a person in need of protection crosses an international border. This person can apply for a 'refugee' status, which in turn entitles him or her to international protection and assistance.

Refugee Rights

Refugee's international rights might constitute a resource and an opportunity structure for mobilization, as the legal framework involves international protection and assistance. The institutional and legal definition of a 'refugee' came in the aftermath of the Second World War, with the establishment of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The definition in the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees is the following:

¹⁰ Achol-Pii was a settlement for Sudanese refugees in Pader district, in the LRA heartland. The settlement was attacked several times by the LRA, most recently on 5th August 2002, when 55 people were killed. The UNHCR thereafter moved the refugees to Masindi district (Kaiser 2005).

[T]he term ‘refugee’ shall apply to any person who [...], owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (Art. 1(2)) (Brownlie and Goodwin-Gill 2002; Lawyers Committee 1995)

‘Refugee’ is thus a legal term which applies to individuals outside their country of nationality because of (well-founded) fear of persecution, who are seeking protection and safety. The 1951 Convention is based ideologically on the protection of human rights, and reference is made to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the Preamble to the Convention. The protection of refugees therefore forms an important part of the general protection of human rights (Vevstad 1998:44).

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established by the UN General Assembly in 1950, mandated to work to enhance the protection and rights of refugees. The most important legal framework for the work of the UNHCR and international refugee protection is enshrined in the 1951 United Nations Convention and its 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees (hereafter ‘the 1951 Convention’).

States signatory to the 1951 Convention are legally bound to follow the requirements of the Convention. This means that host states have the legal obligation to protect refugees – most importantly, to provide protection to the refugee until the circumstances causing his or her well-founded fear of persecution cease to exist. A crucial element of this duty is that states may not return a refugee to a place where his life or security is threatened. This is often referred to as the principle of non-refoulement (Vevstad 1998:137).

Although Uganda as a host state and as a signatory to the 1951 Convention has the legal obligation to protect refugees, the UNHCR has also assumed some of these responsibilities in Uganda. For example, the UNHCR has the primary role in refugee status determination (RSD) procedures, thus both exercising refugee protection as well as being the body set to monitor it. Some scholars have criticized this position, asserting that the result is that the UNHCR is unable to promote refugee rights, and is even responsible for the violation of these rights (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005:17).

The UNHCR is expected to offer impartial protection to refugees irrespective of race, gender, nationality, political opinion or religion. Paragraph 2 of the UNHCR statutes underlines that the work of the High Commissioner ‘shall be of an entirely non-political character; it shall be humanitarian and social (...)’ (UNHCR 1996). Although its work is

intended to be humanitarian and non-political, the UNHCR usually operates in a highly political environment, where national and international interests diverge and where international responsibility for refugee protection can clash with national sovereignty (Goodwin-Gill 1999:222). The ideals of impartiality and neutrality often conflict with political realities. This is a dilemma that applies to humanitarian aid in general, not only refugee aid.

In 1969 the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) adopted a convention as a means of addressing the specific refugee situation in Africa. This OAU Convention of 1969 is complementary to the 1951 UN Convention, but extends the definition of refugees to include victims of generalized violence, not only directly targeted individuals (Vevstad 1998:103). The OAU Convention also sets limitations on the political rights of refugees, through its paragraph on 'subversive activities' (Brownlie and Goodwin-Gill 2002, Lawyers Committee 1995). A distinction is made between the refugee who 'seeks a peaceful and normal life and a person fleeing his country for the sole purpose of fomenting subversion from the outside' (Preamble, 4).¹¹ The expression 'subversive activities' is not clearly defined, but has been interpreted broadly by many African states and used as a way to control refugees seeking to form political associations. These restrictions on political rights of the refugee do not tally with the freedom of expression and association guaranteed in articles 19 and 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). In reality, the degree to which refugee political activity is restricted or not will depend on the host government's own preferences and interests (Lawyers Committee 1995). Host states vary in their practice regarding the degree to which they allow political activities among refugees on their territory.

Members of violent and armed groups such as guerrillas usually do not fall under the legal term 'refugee' and are therefore not entitled to claim the right to protection.¹² A distinction between violent and non-violent – but politically active – individuals within the population seeking protection is thus enshrined in international legislation. However, in

¹¹ The restrictions on political rights are formulated in Article III: '1.) Every refugee has duties to the country in which he finds himself, which require in particular that he conforms with its laws and regulations as well as measures taken for the maintenance of public order. He shall also abstain from any subversive activities against any member States of the OAU. 2.) Signatory States undertake to prohibit refugees residing in their respective territories from attacking any Member State of the OAU, by any activity likely to cause tension between member States, and in particular by use of arms, through the press, or by radio' (Brownlie and Goodwin-Gill 2002; Lawyers Committee 1995).

¹² Membership itself does not exclude one from refugee status, but previous actions and participation in war crimes and crimes against humanity do (Goodwin-Gill 1996:97).

reality this distinction can be difficult to draw. Here I will not enter into the legalities of this issue, but merely point out the complexity of the ensuing social reality. For example, the difference between a movement's political and armed wing might be quite unclear in practice. Another issue is that some refugees have been recruited by force. Furthermore, there are families of soldiers living in camps – are they to be allowed visits from the soldier when he/she is off duty? In addition there are soldiers who enter refugee camps to rest and recuperate after fighting. The distinction between military and political activity is thus blurred in many settings. As we shall see, this is also the case with Sudanese refugees in Uganda.

The international legal framework enables international legal and practical protection and assistance from the moment a persecuted individual crosses an international border. This also provides a possibility for the opposition within the country of origin to leave the conflict zone and work on organizing in a more peaceful and protected environment. The legal framework thus presupposes borders between sovereign states, and enables international protection and assistance. Hence, the international legal framework itself might constitute an opportunity structure for mobilization.

Refugee Management and Policy

Refugee management as carried out by the UNHCR and humanitarian organizations is twofold: providing protection and providing assistance. Sometimes there is a tension between the two (Jacobsen 1999, Whitaker 2003). Human rights advocates have criticized the UNHCR, NGOs and donors for giving priority to practical assistance interests when making decisions, while putting protection considerations in second place (Whitaker 2003:153). Often the international refugee regime is faced with the dilemma of having to choose between delivering assistance and securing protection. This is grounded in the distinction between the UNHCR's two primary roles: to deliver humanitarian assistance, and to protect refugees.

Both protection and assistance measures influence refugee mobilization. This section will discuss the impact of four factors on refugee mobilization. These are welfare distribution, settlement policy, the guiding principles of 'durable solutions', and humanitarianism. In different ways these factors shape refugees' opportunities and constraints for political mobilization.

In Uganda, the division of responsibility between the UNHCR and the host state is blurred. In theory the role of the UNHCR is to advocate and monitor the protection and assistance of refugees, while the host state as a signatory to the Geneva Convention is the responsible executive. In practice, the UNHCR plays a major role, by having primary responsibility for the procedures of determining refugee status (RSD) in Uganda, and even more through their financial assistance. The UNHCR has financed salaries for government officials, and health and education services for refugees and has in that way been able to control refugee policy (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005:37–39). One of the problems with the UNHCR’s executive role in RSD processes is that the UNHCR thereby assumes ‘the adjudicatory role’ (ibid:17). It is difficult for the UNHCR to advocate refugee rights and monitor the national RSD process, when they themselves are the ones who implement it.

Still, the UNHCR’s possibilities and ability to operate independently depend on the host state, which regulates access and operational contexts. The UNHCR has several times been hindered access to and/or prevented from carrying out activities by host states, and this again compromises its autonomy and legitimacy (Loescher 2003b:6). In Uganda the UNHCR representative was deported by the government in 2003 because of disagreement on protection measures concerning the Achol Pii refugees (Kaiser 2005:360).

Both the international refugee regime and the host state are responsible for and influence refugee management and policy in Uganda, so some of the issues discussed in this chapter will also be taken up in the next chapter on the role of the host state. For example, settlement policy is discussed in both chapters: the institutionalized aspects of camps and settlements will be the focus in the present chapter, while the actual context and placement of settlements will be central in the following chapter.

Welfare Distribution

The international refugee regime serves as a welfare distributor under conditions of crises and conflicts. The literature on refugee mobilization points to the advantages that humanitarian operations can bring, in the form of food and safe havens for oppositions operating in exile. The distribution of food aid and control of the distribution process are powerful tools. In Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan, refugee status was made conditional on membership in one of the Pakistani-recognized political parties, and relief goods were distributed through appointed representatives among the refugees. These were called *maliks* (‘bosses’) and were appointed by the Pakistani authorities (Terry 2002:67). In the

Rwandan refugee camps in Zaire (DRC) in the aftermath of the genocide, Hutu militants hid among the refugees and controlled many of the camps. Some relief agencies intentionally provided soldiers with food, arguing that they would otherwise steal from the refugees (Lischer 2003:83).

Most refugees in Uganda are allocated a plot of land, normally 100m by 100m per family/household. The quality of the land varies, as does household capacity to grow produce (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005:226). Some settlements have experienced insecurity which has also affected household production. According to the UNHCR, an increase in food distribution was required for 2004.

Welfare distribution is carried out by the UNHCR's implementing partners, which are various NGOs. For example, food distribution is organized by the UNHCR, which ensures that the WFP¹³ delivers food to the settlements, while implementing partners are responsible for distribution within the camp. Food delivery committees, elected among the refugees, are usually involved with distribution; they also provide the OPM¹⁴ with lists of persons living in a particular zone. Refugee Welfare Committees (RWC) can play an important role in these processes. The RWC is elected among the refugees in a settlement, and is usually composed of respected, vocal, and sometimes well-educated individuals (interview with key informant).

Refugees sometimes sell distributed food on the local market, usually in order to obtain other necessary commodities, such as matches. This is usually frowned upon by relief agencies, but is also acknowledged as an important survival strategy. This in turn means that local markets are affected by the refugee population and the relief economy that comes with it (Merkx 2000). Refugees who live in areas too remote for this activity are more vulnerable and more dependent on aid distribution.

The UNHCR together with the GoU has tried to implement a 'Self Reliance Strategy' for Sudanese refugees in Uganda. Launched in 1999, it was intended 'to integrate the services provided to the refugees into regular government structures and policies' and to move 'from relief to development' (cited in Kaiser 2005:355) One problem with the self-sufficiency policy was that the UNHCR and implementing partners had not invested in

¹³ World Food Programme

¹⁴ As indicated earlier, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) is in charge of refugee management on the part of Ugandan authorities. This is explained in greater detail in Chapter 4.

strengthening local health and education structures, so these local structures lacked the capacity for dealing with refugees (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005:43).

What is the influence of welfare distribution on mobilization processes among refugees? Access to resources, especially food, is a valuable asset. The fact that refugees are given land, and that at least the aim of the relief programme is self-reliance, can help to make refugees less dependent on the international refugee regime, and less vulnerable in relation to those who control the distribution system. However, food scarcity remains a common problem. A significant number of refugees are in need of food aid, and their dependence on relief makes them vulnerable to the power exercised by the elected leaders in the camp. A position for example within the RWC can therefore provide an important opportunity to mobilize. Food distribution is not conditional on membership in a political party, but it requires that the recipients live in settlements and have refugee status. In this way, the international refugee regime contributes to separating refugees from the local population. Welfare distribution is one of the ways in which the refugees are gathered physically – which is also an important opportunity structure for mobilization. Settlement policy is another important way of gathering people.

Settlement Policy

Refugee camps and settlements are the most widespread institutionalized measure for refugee assistance and protection. According to the UNHCR, 4.7 million persons were residing in camps or similar arrangements in 2003, which corresponds to 36% of persons of concern to the UNHCR (UNHCR 2005:55). In Africa, camps are more prevalent among the population of concern to the UNHCR than elsewhere; they are almost twice as likely to live in camps (60%) as in Asia (34%) (UNHCR 2005:55)¹⁵.

Loescher (2003) is critical towards refugee camps because of what he sees as the increased threat of militarization of refugees. He argues that refugee camps are a significant instrument for armed exile groups:

Refugees can be ‘warehoused’ in refugee camps for years, even decades. Without hope and despairing of the future, some refugees turn to violence and become easy recruits for terrorist networks. Armed militia and criminal elements often take refuge in refugee camps and use them for recuperation and to recruit and to mobilize for ongoing conflicts in their countries of origin. (Loescher 2003:35)

¹⁵ There is variation in what is termed ‘camp’ with regard to the degree of organized structure, size and isolation. In its statistical yearbook, the UNHCR classification is broad, and refers to ‘camps and centres’.

Loescher thus emphasizes the refugee camp as a structure especially convenient for armed elements among the refugee population. For a guerrilla to move into a refugee camp is also characterized as one of the most successful strategies of guerrilla warfare, because of the legitimacy drawn from the refugees and the control mechanisms in refugee camps (Rufin 1993, in Terry 2002:8). It is known that the Sudanese guerrilla movement, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), has been recruiting support and soldiers in refugee camps in Ethiopia (Johnson 2003), in Kenya and in Uganda (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005).

To provide assistance and protection to refugees through placing them in closed political, social and geographical structures, as most settlements and camps can be described, has been widely criticized.¹⁶ Particularly strong is the criticism put forward by Verdirame and Harrell-Bond (2005) in *Rights in Exile: Janus-Faced Humanitarianism*. They refer to the confinement of refugees to camps as a violation of human rights and as a 'cruel and dehumanising absurdity which neither economic nor political factors can justify.' (ibid: 338)

Other studies see the refugee camp as an institution of control, and sometimes compare it to a prison. Malkki (1995) has analysed the refugee camp in Mishamo in Tanzania this way – the camp as an institution of control. She draws upon the perspectives of Foucault in her analysis, and these theoretical lenses render visible the controlling elements of the camp as an institution. This she shows through a sort of discourse analysis of refugee narratives, and a comparison between refugees in the camp, and in the town. Malkki reveals how the refugee camp as a technique of power enables and fosters the development of a socio-political collective identity (Malkki, 1995). In Malkki's view, the refugee camp is an institution that segregates refugees from the outside world and controls them, while also providing an environment conducive to the formation of a strong collective identity.

In Uganda, refugees are required to live in settlements, and the UNHCR and its implementing partners have taken responsibility for providing assistance in these camps.¹⁷ One study of refugee rights in Uganda and Kenya argues that 'The model of segregated

¹⁶ For examples other than those mentioned further on in this section, see for instance Harrell-Bond (2000) or Crisp and Jacobsen (1998). In addition, the US Committee for Refugees has launched an international NGO campaign against refugee camps, titled 'anti-warehousing'.

¹⁷ Refugee settlements in Uganda are referred to both as 'camps' and as 'settlements' in this thesis, following the UNHCR's broad classification.

camps increases the potential for abuse rather than enhances the protection of refugee rights' (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005:15). The same study points out that refugees in settlements in Uganda do not enjoy the right to freedom of movement – a point reinforced by the isolated locations of many of the settlements (ibid: 15–16). This also has implications for refugees' possibilities of engaging in business or trade and thereby being able to make a living for themselves (ibid: 16; see also Jacobsen 2002). The camp structure undermines the refugees' possibilities of participating in trading, or other economic sectors. In other words, their livelihood is weakened by the same policy that is supposed to assist and protect them

An important implication of the encampment and the restriction of freedom of movement has been insecurity. 'In both Kenya and Uganda, the social make-up of camps made it impossible for refugees to enjoy the right to physical safety from internal strife and their location subjected them to rebel attacks from outside' (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005:16). Insecurity for refugees in camps and settlements thus stems from people within the refugee population and from rebel movements outside.

Settlement policies can influence refugee mobilization. A focus on settlements and camp structures, to ensure that refugees are physically gathered in one place, also acts to separate and in some instances isolate refugees from nationals, as well as making the refugees' activities controllable. In this sense, settlement policy can be seen as an opportunity structure for mobilization. One idea that reinforces the use of settlements in refugee management is the focus of aid organizations on repatriation, which has been singled out as the most important durable solution to a refugee situation.

Durable Solutions

A cornerstone in the UNHCR's policy is the principle of the three 'durable solutions' for refugees. These are return to the country of origin, resettlement in a third country, or host country integration. The UNHCR has focused more on return than the other two solutions, since the 1990s were declared to be the 'decade of repatriation' for the UNHCR. In consequence, refugee policy has been guided by an emphasis on return. This means that the refugees' condition is characterized as temporary – even in protracted and long-term refugee situations.

Repatriation has been criticized for the inherent assumption that return to a life before flight is better than what life can be in exile: 'Because post-repatriation life, or

“home” in the discourse of repatriation, is rooted in the country of origin it is considered by outsiders to be necessarily better than life in exile’ (Hammond 1999:230).

During my fieldwork, many refugees were anxious to learn whether I believed that return would be a voluntary procedure. Often they would say things like ‘if the UN tells me to leave, I will leave.’ Some refugees would initially say that they wanted to return. But when I asked more specific questions, it turned out that most of them were rather suspicious about the return, and that they would take many things into consideration before actually returning for good. What many refugees did was to apply a transnational strategy to return, keeping one foot in each country. For example, one family member would be sent to Sudan to assess the situation and to set up a *tukul* (a traditional house) to secure access to land, while the rest of the family stayed in Uganda. Then they would move back and forth.

The focus on return has implications for the integration of refugees in the host country. Especially when crises are protracted, as for the Sudanese refugees who have been living in Uganda for some 15 years now, temporary solutions may not be adequate. The increased focus on refugee repatriation has led to integration becoming a forgotten solution, even though some scholars argue that integration is often the most viable solution for refugees:

Respect for the human rights of refugees can only be improved once encampment is abandoned as the policy of choice and integration is again pursued as the best solution. Integration is after all the solution that historically has been the predominant and probably the most successful one. (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005:338)

An increased focus on integration might influence refugee management measures such as the use of refugee camps, and thereby policy on durable solutions might influence political opportunity structures for refugee mobilization as well.

Humanitarianism

Grounded in the Geneva Conventions, the most important principles of humanitarian aid are impartiality, neutrality and independence. Humanitarian assistance is to be provided to persons in need on both sides of a conflict, and is based on the principle that all human beings have equal dignity. Humanitarian actors emphasize the non-political character of their actions in order to create a ‘humanitarian space’ in war, disconnected from political claims and positions in the conflict (Terry 2002:19). This humanitarian space is important for the legitimacy of humanitarian aid, and for the conditions in which it can operate.

However, the humanitarian imperatives and the organization's dependence on donations may also have a negative impact on refugees.

Humanitarian organizations have been taken to task for their insistence on the neutrality of refugees. Describing photos of refugees in a calendar made by the UNHCR, Malkki (1995) criticizes this depiction of refugees as only a human body, stripped of everything that could be personality- or culture-specific:

The discursive constitution of the refugee as bare humanity is associated with a widespread a priori expectation that, in crossing an international border, he or she has lost connection with his or her culture and identity. (Malkki 1995:11)

Categorizing refugees as human beings without history, experience, culture, or tradition is a way of representing them as infants, as newborns without a past or an established identity, and thereby as something distinct from other human beings. Analysing the political impact of representing refugees this way, Hannah Arendt wrote about the refugees of the Second World War: 'the abstract nakedness of being nothing but human was their greatest danger' (Arendt 1973:300). The consequences of depicting refugees as mere victims means a depoliticizing and 'depowering' of people, which again legitimizes that the decisions should be taken by someone else than the refugee themselves. Representing refugees as non-political, bare human beings, can justify their needing to be told what is best for them.

In a classic study of refugee assistance *Imposing Aid*, Harrell-Bond (1986) argued that humanitarian aid agencies operating in Southern Sudan were paternalistic in relation to refugees. Among refugees in Uganda this may also have been the case. Many refugees, especially from urban areas, felt bereft of human dignity in their encounters with the UNHCR and their implementing partners (interviews with primary respondents). Another scholar made the same observation during her fieldwork among young urban refugees in Kampala: 'For most refugees, the way they were treated at the UNHCR and InterAid offices reflected a very negative, not to say deeply humiliating experience.' (Lammers 2005:5). A study of refugee assistance among Sudanese in northern Uganda also argued that assistance agencies view refugees merely as recipients of aid, not as partners in local development and community building (Merkx 2000:22).

Ideas of humanitarianism may influence refugee management, and thereby influence opportunity structure for refugee mobilization. Humanitarian ideals can reinforce policies that bring about exclusion and isolation of refugees.

Concluding Remarks

The international refugee regime influences the political opportunity structure for refugee mobilization. The legal framework makes possible international refugee protection and assistance, and this in turn influences refugee mobilization. Refugee management and policy can influence mobilization, as welfare distribution may give access to resources, and settlement policy can lead to physical gathering or isolation of the refugee population, which again entails a control potential. Refugee camps and settlements can hinder integration with the local population, to a certain extent forcing refugees to seek opportunities and security within their own community. These processes are reinforced by the focus of international aid organizations on repatriation and the idea of humanitarian action as being something fundamentally apolitical.

As previously indicated, a conflict between assistance and protection measures may arise in refugee assistance, where priority is usually given to assistance measures rather than protection. This is sometimes explained by the view that relief organizations in practice feel more accountable in relation to their donors than to the recipients, in this case the refugees (Terry 2002, Lischer 2003). Organizations like the UNHCR are therefore encouraged to focus their efforts on protection of refugees: ‘While individual governments may feel uncomfortable being criticized, UNHCR will gain greater respect in the long term for speaking up for refugee protection principles than for remaining silent.’ (Loescher 2003b:16).

Protection of refugee rights – both human rights and specific refugee rights – is one of the primary roles of the International Refugee Regime. In this sense, the international refugee regime is a structure that can secure the rights of refugees to political mobilization, as in the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression. Considering this, one might assume that the international refugee regime can have a different influence on political mobilization among refugees, one which does not victimize and depoliticize, nor serve to fuel militarization.

However, the international refugee regime is not the only factor that influences refugee mobilization. The roles played by the host state and the exile community itself are also important in understanding refugee mobilization.

4) The Host State

How does the host state influence political mobilization among refugees? This is what I set out to explore in this chapter. The host state provides an important opportunity structure for refugee mobilization in the sense that it is the political authority governing the area in which refugees are living. According to the Geneva Convention, the host state (if signatory) is responsible for the protection of refugees (Vevstad 1998). In turn, refugees have an obligation to respect and abide the laws of the host state. Refugees have thus both rights and duties in relation to the host state.

Normally the concept of *political opportunity structure* is used to analyse the structure (usually the state) that some person or group is mobilizing in opposition to. In this study, the concept needs to be altered slightly, as the refugees are mobilizing in opposition to the state they are fleeing from. At the same time, the host state has an influence on this mobilization. I will analyse how the host state affects refugee mobilization by applying the concept of political opportunity structure. Analysing the political opportunity structure in relation to the host state is therefore different in the sense that the refugees do not primarily engage in trying to change the political authority that provides the opportunity structure. Still, the host state's policies towards refugees serve to shape their possibilities and constraints for political mobilization.

In particular, this chapter will discuss how the GoU's exclusionary or inclusionary practices influence political mobilization among Sudanese refugees. The focus will be on refugee policy in Uganda, and on whether the host state uses refugee rebel movements as a proxy in its own war against a neighbouring state.

The Situation in Uganda

For decades people have been forced to move because of war and insurgencies in the area around the border between Sudan and Uganda. Refugees from Uganda have moved back and forth across the border, depending on the vagaries of the political situation in the two countries. One Sudanese, Peter, who is currently living in Kampala, gives an account of his movements ever since he was born:

I was born in Uganda [1972] in Kitgum district, not far from where our place in Sudan is. I grew up in Sudan, where I went to primary school in Torit and Nimule and in Page, near the border. When I was in Primary five the war started. Then I had no school for three years. Primary six and junior one I did in Parajok [Sudan] after that. Then I went to Kitgum [Uganda] with my auntie. But it was very hard for us in Kitgum, the LRA attacked the refugee camp. Also the Museveni army [UPDF] disturbed the camp, so in 1989 I decided to go back to Sudan and to my village. But because of the war, life became difficult for us. In 1993 we fled again from Sudan to Uganda and came to Kiryandango. (interview in Kampala, March 2004)

As Peter's experiences illustrates, the border area has been unstable for many years, and migration both ways has been frequent. His story also shows that several armed actors have been involved in destabilizing the area; normally these include at least the GoS's forces, the LRA, SPLA and UPDF.

Since the current president of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni seized power in 1986, the northern part of the country has been plagued by rebel activity, civil unrest and political marginalization. Currently there are around 1.8 million IDPs, most of them living in camps and reliant on humanitarian aid, in northern Uganda (OCHA 2005). The living conditions for these IDPs are extremely harsh, and mortality figures are higher than in Iraq (UNDP 2005). The rebel movement Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) was started in 1987 and has operated in northern Uganda and southern Sudan since then. It has been characterized as an especially brutal army, known for abductions of children. In 2005, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for five LRA commanders, accusing them of crimes against humanity. IDPs in the north are also exposed to human rights abuses by the UPDF army, although to a lesser degree than from the LRA. UPDF abuse has been criticized recently by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, who point out that abuse by the national army is especially serious as this army is deployed to protect the civilian population (IRINNEWS, 13 January 2006).

There is also an international dimension to the war in northern Uganda, as the LRA has had a safe haven in Sudan and has received financial and military support from the government there at least since 1994 (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999:28). At the same time, the GoU is supporting the SPLM/A, the Sudanese opposition guerrilla movement. Uganda's fight against the LRA is supported by the USA as a part of the latter's interest in restraining the regional influence of the Islamist government in Khartoum. The local conflicts thus have regional and international dimensions as well. For refugees, the presence of so many armed actors in the area creates a general situation of insecurity.

Refugee Policy: Protection or Security?

When a Sudanese in need of protection crosses the border from Sudan to Uganda, he /she is required to register at the border and apply for refugee status. Most Sudanese are given refugee status according to group recognition, after an interview with UNHCR and OPM representatives. When a person has received refugee status, he/she is allocated to a settlement. One representative of the Ugandan authorities in Adjumani district explained the procedure this way:

When they are accepted as refugees they are given some minimum basics, and then they are given a piece of land in one of the settlements. The land is given by the district authorities, and then filled up. The first settlement here [in Adjumani] was Magburo. In relation to protection my work is to protect refugees physically, morally. There are police posts and military establishments in the camps, to protect them. (Interview with OPM Adjumani Refugee Desk representative)

Uganda's refugee policy requires refugees to live in settlements, a practice dating back to the Second World War, when the country became host to European refugees, Poles being the largest group (Gingyera-Pinyewa 1998:5). These refugees were, under the British Colonial administration, located in camps in remote areas. Since then, Uganda has hosted large groups of refugees, especially from Rwanda, Congo, Sudan, Kenya and other countries in the region. A total of 236,000 refugees were registered in Uganda in 2003 (UNHCR 2005), so it can be said that Uganda has been generous host to displaced people. At the same time, the conflicts in Uganda have been producing refugees of their own. Currently the number of IDPs is the most serious case, with some 1.8 million displaced people living in camps in the northern part of the country (OCHA 2005). This issue, although important, will not be a central topic in this thesis, however.

The 1960 Control of Alien Refugees Act (CARA),¹⁸ which provides the legal framework for refugee policy in Uganda, basically defines refugees as a security issue, and emphasizes control over the refugee population. CARA is consistent neither with the Geneva Convention nor with the OAU Convention, both of which were ratified by Uganda after 1960. Main criticisms of CARA include that refugees are defined as a class of aliens who without papers can be subject to imprisonment; that refugees' freedom of movement is restricted; and that refugees can be dispossessed of their property (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005:29–31). The GoU is currently processing a new Refugee Bill, intended

¹⁸ The Control of Alien Refugees Act (1960), Chapter 64 of the laws of Uganda.

to bring the country's refugee law more in line with its other international legal obligations. The work with the Refugee Bill came in the aftermath of Uganda's 1995 Constitution and its Bill of Rights, but the process of approving the Refugee Bill has been very slow. At the time of my fieldwork, the Bill was in process, and at the time of writing it has still not been approved. Thus, CARA has remained the valid document. It is criticized for being an instrument to control rather than protect refugees, and for requiring refugees to live in settlement camps, which violates refugees' right to freedom of movement (Garry 1998:67). Although CARA is not followed as strictly as before, its most important legacy is a 'culture of centralised control' (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005:31).

Administrative responsibility for refugees lies with the Directorate of Refugees (DoR) under the Minister of Disaster Preparedness and Refugees in the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). The Directorate has desk officers appointed to various districts responsible for supervising commanders and officers in the settlements (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005:37). The OPM is thus the acting authority in relation to refugees.

During my fieldwork, I had to adjust to the requirements from the OPM. Even though I had been granted official approval from the Uganda National Council of Science and Technology (UNCST) as well as from the Resident District Commissioner in both Kampala and Adjumani, it proved necessary to ask the OPM for extra permission. In Kampala the UNHCR and Inter Aid refused to talk to me without OPM permission; and in order to go to Adjumani, to visit refugee settlements, OPM permission was required. The OPM thus functions as a parallel system in relation to refugee research and thus to refugee administration in general, mostly because of the security dimension. The OPM is the host state's acting authority towards the refugees. When I asked the OPM representative in Adjumani whether he thought the eventual return of Sudanese would be a voluntary matter, he answered:

We will apply a minimum amount of force, for example we will withdraw the assistance. Not to everybody of course, like some people we know, they will probably be imprisoned or killed or revenged if they go back, because of what has happened in the war. (OPM Refugee Desk Officer in Adjumani district)

Although CARA has not been strictly applied in Uganda (Lomo et al. 2001), it does inform refugee policy. Refugees in Uganda are confined to live in settlements, many of these situated in remote areas, and some close to the border. Refugee assistance is conditional on refugees residing in settlements. But partly because of the insecurity in

refugee camps, many refugees come to live in Kampala (Bernstein 2005). This is not usually allowed, except for those permitted for security reasons through the ‘Urban Caseload’ – currently 210 refugees (Bernstein 2005:8).

On the one hand, Uganda’s refugee policy focuses on controlling refugees – but at the same time, the policy is to allow the SPLM/A to operate in the country. Thus we see that the political opportunity structure is contributing to the SPLM/A’s strong position in exile.

The SPLM/A’s presence is unofficially tolerated by the Ugandan authorities. This becomes particularly evident through the position of the SPLM/A membership card, which serves as an important ID card in Uganda, often giving Sudanese protection from being detained and harassed by the police. One of the interviewees had kept his membership card in order to move freely, although he had left the SPLM/A and was in fact fleeing from them. He used the card to cross the border into Kenya as well.

Several high-ranking SPLA officers have houses in Kampala. Although many are also based in Nairobi, I was told that many of them prefer to have their children in school in Uganda. One international diplomat involved in the peace negotiations told me that many high-ranking officers in the movement even have Ugandan passports, making international travel easier.

Both the control element of refugee policy and the support of the SPLM/A are important for understanding how the host state can influence refugee mobilization among Sudanese in Uganda. The host state as an opportunity structure will in the following be discussed through three factors: settlement, livelihood and insecurity.

Settlement

How can settlement policy in the host state influence refugee mobilization? GoU refugee policy requires most refugees to live in settlements in remote areas. This represents an obstacle to freedom of movement and to refugee’s possibilities of being included in economic and political activity in the host country. Kaiser (2005) attributes this to the host state’s focus on repatriation as the solution to the refugee policy and argues that integration would be a better solution in terms of development policies towards refugees.

Confining refugees to settlements in remote areas and restricting their movements also prevent refugees from participating in small-scale trading and other economically productive activities (Jacobsen 2002:593). This leaves many refugees idle in camps, especially those who have been allotted poor land and cannot sustain their families by what

they can produce on it. Moreover, through this exclusion the host state misses the opportunity of gaining from what refugees could contribute to the economy (Jacobsen 2002).

Many refugee settlements are situated close to the border, for example Adjumani district, which hosts many Sudanese settlements (see map, Appendix III). It is well known that the SPLM/A is present in the areas in northern Uganda bordering Sudan. Especially since the SPLM/A captured Yei and the area leading up to Yei, the road from Arua in northern Uganda through Koboko has been an important way of accessing Southern Sudan by road. The SPLM/A also uses the road through Adjumani to bring supplies from Nimule to Yei.

SPLM/A recruitment activity has been frequent in many refugee settlements, and this has been more or less tolerated by the host state (Hovil 2001, Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005). The SPLM/A has also been able to carry out recruitment activities in city centres, in areas where many Sudanese live (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005).¹⁹ However, it seems that settlements which gather many Sudanese in one place situated close to the border are most convenient for refugee mobilization.

Host-state policies on settlement can influence mobilization both through the type of settlement (as in self-settlement versus refugee camps) and its location (close to/distant from the border). The combination of refugee camps and a location close to the border seems to provide greater opportunities for refugee mobilization activities.

Livelihood

For refugees some livelihood opportunities are offered by the host state (and some by the international refugee regime), while other opportunities are self-acquired. The host state's main contribution to refugee livelihood opportunities is the land that is provided. A key informant describes the distribution of land this way:

Ideally the land is given to families/households in about 100 by 100m, although this varies from camp to camp and depends on land available per refugee in every camp. The principle applies equally for unmarried individuals and in some instances to UAMs [Unaccompanied Minors]. When a family expands, technically the land holding should also expand, although there is evidence that this takes long.

That refugees are given land by the government means that they can be more independent and self-sufficient than otherwise. However, the quality of the land is often poor, and there

¹⁹ How this recruitment activity is exercised is described in greater detail in Chapter 5.

is considerable variation in the number of people in a household, as well as their ability to cultivate land. Other livelihood opportunities are therefore pursued – such as petty trade, poultry raising, or remittances if the household has relatives abroad. Petty trade can be difficult if the settlement is located in an isolated area. As shown in the previous chapter, food aid is offered by the international refugee regime in some instances.

Uganda has had a restrictive approach to employment of refugees, and this is retained in the new refugee bill. Moreover, an employer is allowed to pay refugees less than their Ugandan counterparts, especially if the work is related to a refugee settlement (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005:217–218).

Education is another factor that is relevant for livelihood opportunities. The UNHCR has provided primary education in the refugee settlements. Secondary schools have been present in some, most of them started as self-help initiatives. There have been few opportunities for support to tertiary education, the Hugh Pilkington Trust Fund being one of the alternatives. In 1998, Makerere University decided to charge the same fees from refugees as nationals, whereas they had previously been charged as international students. (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005:256).

Many Sudanese, if they can afford it, send their children to school in Uganda and go back and forth to Sudan. Refugees often cited the good educational opportunities in Uganda as an argument for not wanting to return to Sudan as soon as the peace accord was signed. They would rather wait for themselves or their children to finish their schooling in Uganda, as educational opportunities are scarce in southern Sudan. A Sudanese I interviewed in Kampala (a primary respondent) had recently moved there from Nairobi where her closest family live, in order to attend a better secondary school in Kampala while staying with extended family in Kampala. She was born in Khartoum, had lived in Ethiopia, moved to Kenya, lived in Kakuma before her family moved to Nairobi. Her father is currently working in Sudan and paying for her education. Thus, her educational opportunities were self-acquired. People with funding and resources also have access to education. Income can also buy a Ugandan ID card, according to a key informant: ‘Many Sudanese can obtain status as Ugandan through “graduate tax ticket”. It requires name, physical address and money. Many Sudanese study at Makerere, but it is difficult to know exactly how many because some of them pass as Ugandan.’ (Key informant)

Apart from funding from relatives there are some official funding possibilities, through the UNHCR, OPM, JRS²⁰ and other NGOs. As one refugee in Adjumani explained: ‘I then got a scholarship from OPM to go to Arua for two years of studies in business administration. That was in 1999 and 2000. Since 2001 I have been working with this NGO.’ (interview with Elijah)

One consequence of the existence of educational opportunities is that refugees move to city centres. ‘There is a growing number of urban refugees, basically because of the security situation in the camps, and because of education opportunities’ (interview, key informant). Generally, urban refugees do not receive support, so this opportunity is reserved those who can get a scholarship or who have private funding.

Livelihood opportunities are worse for refugees living in isolated and insecure places and where the quality of the land is poor. Opportunities are few, dependence on food assistance is high, and educational opportunities are scarce. For those refugees with access to resources, there are better opportunities in trading, education and so forth. Such differences may influence mobilization in the sense that the SPLM/A can provide opportunities for those who otherwise have none. Poverty, and lack of possibilities, may serve to make mobilization an attractive alternative.

Insecurity

Many Sudanese refugees in Uganda live in a situation of insecurity – especially those placed in settlements close to the border. The quest for security is important, and if the host state cannot provide security, it has to be sought within the exile community.

During a group discussion in a refugee camp in Adjumani district, refugees said ‘One of our problems is that the GoU didn’t place us in a safe location. Every night we sleep in the bush because of these rebels.’ (Group Discussion, Mireyi)

Sudanese refugees in Uganda have been both the subject of control on the part of the Ugandan authorities and victims of insurgencies in the north: they have not been sufficiently protected by the host country. Sudanese refugees are threatened by rebel attacks, and the host state is supposed to provide protection. I asked the OPM representative about the security situation; the following is an excerpt from the interview:

²⁰ Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is one of the implementing partners of UNHCR in Uganda

How is the security situation for the refugees in this district? It is ok. Sometimes back it was worse, but now it has improved. We still have some pockets of insecurity. Like Maaji and Magburo. But people in the settlements are telling me that they are sleeping in the bush because they are afraid? You know, everybody perceives the situation different. Some people maybe like to open the window in their office, others not, it is up to each and everyone. Just like some people sleep in the bush and others not.’ (Interview with OPM Adjumani Refugee Desk representative)

The GoU has insisted on minimizing the LRA problem and on trying to solve it by military means. Every time the government announces that the LRA is so weak that it will be defeated the next week, the LRA comes back even stronger. For internally displaced Ugandans and for the Sudanese, the LRA is a constant threat and has created great fear (UNDP 2005). The government is criticized for not been able to protect its citizens. Similarly it has neither protected the Sudanese from the attacks (Kaiser 2005). The best solution with regard to such external threats to refugees would be to move them further away from the insecure areas of the border region.

Sudanese refugees in Uganda are also a part of a landscape of huge groups of migrants and displaced peoples. There are refugees fleeing from the war in Southern Sudan; but there are also Ugandan refugees who fled to Southern Sudan in the 1980s, who went back to Uganda in the early 1990s because of intensive fighting in Southern Sudan. And there is a huge population being internally displaced in northern Uganda due to the war in the north and the GoU’s policy of organizing ‘Protected Villages’ (Kaiser 2000:50). Refugee camps are an easy target for the rebels, so many refugees have fled from their first camp to friends and family staying in other camps, further away from the border. This is technically illegal, according to the GoU’s refugee policy (Kaiser 2000), and further complicates life in refugee camps already short on resources.

One possible consequence of insecurity for political mobilization may be that some refugees decide to join armed forces in order to protect themselves. This was suggested by an SPLM/A representative: “Most people that were in Achol-Pii are soldiers. They want to go back and they want to beat the rebels” (interview, primary respondent). As mentioned, Achol-Pii was a refugee camp in Pader that was attacked by the LRA in 2002. Many Sudanese were killed and some abducted. The camp was later closed down (Kaiser 2005).

Another element complicating the (in)security situation is that many refugees are fleeing from atrocities committed by the SPLA, especially refugees from Equatorial Sudan who initially did not support ‘the movement’ (Kaiser 2000:45). Insecurity in settlements has also been caused by internal threats such as forced recruitment by the SPLM/A (see chapter 5 for a longer discussion of this). The OPM admitted that this was a fear: ‘Some

people fear abduction, usually we would then move them to another place. Sometimes they go for resettlement in another country.’ (Interview with OPM Adjumani Refugee Desk).

Insecurity may also lead to further displacement (Kaiser 2000, Okello et al. 2005) as well as to return:

The situation in the settlements now is that every person is ready to go back. But it is not yet known what is happening, for example the people that were displaced from Maaji last year because of the LRA insurgents. Now, when this happened, many people decided to go direct to Sudan. But some are remaining in Adjumani because of educational programmes or those that are single parents. (Interview, primary respondent)

Insecurity and displacement may also affect educational opportunities for some, as pointed out by a teacher at Alere Secondary School, a boarding school for Sudanese in Adjumani. ‘Alere is ok, but if parents are displaced, the children are affected, because it gets harder for the parents to pay the school fees.’ (interview with primary respondent)

Refugees who live in insecure areas may seek protection elsewhere when the host state and the international refugee regime are not able to provide adequate protection. Thereby an opportunity rises for refugees to organize protection among themselves – and this is a space where the SPLM/A has been able to take advantage of opportunities and to offer alternative security measures.

Refugees as Instruments of Foreign Policy?

When refugees and host states become involved in a conflict which at first was internal to the refugees’ country of origin, the conflict spreads across international borders and thus becomes regionalized.

Raids and guerrilla activity across the border may drag the host state into an existing conflict, and in fact this may be the deliberate strategy of armed exile groups. The offer of sanctuary to refugees may in itself invite military retaliation: in response to real or perceived threats of ‘refugee warrior communities,’ refugee camps have increasingly become military targets. In some cases host states have themselves armed or helped to arm refugee fighting groups as a weapon against the country of origin, but then found themselves unable to control the consequences of having done so. This occurred in the Great Lakes region of Africa, resulting in the destabilization of the entire region in the late 1990s. (Loescher 2003:35)

As pointed out by Loescher, the militarization of refugees and refugee camps may eventually lead to regional destabilization involving neighbouring states. In the case of Sudan and Uganda, the conflict in Sudan has had a destabilizing effect on the situation in Uganda, but, at the same time, the situation in Uganda has spilled over to Sudan. The role

of the host state in the regional situation affects refugees, and here both the relationship to the country of origin (in this case Sudan) and the insurgency (SPLM/A) is important.

This section discusses whether refugees are dragged into the conflict as instrument in a conflict between neighbouring states. It therefore discusses relations between the governments of Uganda and Sudan, as well as between the SPLM/A and the government of Uganda.

The Relationship between the GoU and the SPLM/A

The GoU supports the SPLM/A politically but – officially – not military. However, there are indications that the SPLM/A also receives military support. Despite the prohibition on ‘subversive activities’, the SPLM/A is tolerated in Uganda – not only its political but also its military activities (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005:200). However, it is unclear to what extent the GoU has supported the SPLM/A, and to what extent the GoU has actually influenced the SPLM/A.

An SPLM representative in Kampala told me he was the ‘bridge between SPLM and the government of Uganda.’ He went on to explain that the GoU supported the SPLM, but not officially the SPLA. He also told me that one can move around freely with an SPLM membership card, and that some commanders even have Ugandan passports. He added that the membership card can be used in other East African states, such as Kenya, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe (interview with Paul).

A Sudanese SPLM/A representative told me:

Many Sudanese prefer to live in Uganda, because it is safer than Kenya. In Kenya foreigners are more harassed and in risk of detention. In Uganda the membership card protects. Also, the education system is better here. Many people have their children in school in Uganda and go back and forth to Sudan themselves. (Interview with Daniel).

On 20 March 2004, the Ugandan government paper *New Vision* printed an article saying ‘Premiership brings SPLA men to Koboko town’. The article was in the sports section and a part of a series of articles presenting various sports venues. This time it was presenting a pub in Koboko, a little town close to the Sudanese border. From the article: ‘... this is where SPLA officers take time off the war with the Sudan army to watch the English Premiership.’ This article – in a government paper – illustrates how the presence of SPLA commanders in Uganda is in practice accepted.

Also, an SPLM/A representative in Uganda, involved in recruitment of soldiers, told me: ‘I was in Kiryandongo just before Easter. A commander from inside came and brought

people back. Now they have gone inside to fight the LRA. They are fighting together with UPDF. And we will catch them!’ (interview with primary respondent).

The UPDF participated in the SPLM/A offensive in 1997, where among others, the town of Yei was captured. One of my interviewees had been in Yei at the time. ‘They are collaborating a lot with UPDF. Even I remember when Yei was captured I came down to Kaya, still in Sudan, and I realized it was our [Ugandan] soldiers, NRA²¹ people.’ (interview key informant)

There are also indications that the UPDF has participated in the SPLM/A forced recruitment activity in Adjumani in Uganda. One Sudanese refugee in Adjumani was asked whether the SPLM/A were cooperating with UPDF, and answered: ‘Yes, when they came for this recruitment thing there were some UPDF soldiers. People knew because some of the soldiers didn’t speak Arabic.’ (Int55). This might just be a rumour among Sudanese, but other studies have documented that the UPDF assisted the SPLM/A in forced recruitment activities in Adjumani district (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005: 176, Hovil 2001). It has also been asserted that SPLA soldiers store their weapons in UPDF barracks while visiting refugee camps (Hovil 2001).

When I asked the OPM representative about this issue he answered: ‘Sometimes the SPLA they come and people sing, and they go back to fight, but we don’t think people are being recruited forcefully.’ (Interview with OPM Adjumani Refugee Desk). This answer would at least indicate that SPLM/A recruitment activities are tolerated.

To which extent is the GoU actually able to control or influence the activities of the SPLM/A? What are the criteria for defining the support as waging a war of proxy? Uganda has an interest in supporting the SPLM/A both ideologically and in fighting the LRA, but perhaps not in waging war against the GoS – at least not in the sense of controlling its territory. On the other hand, the GoU has evinced a positive attitude towards a regime change in Sudan. In the mid-1990s, Uganda formed an unofficial alliance together with Ethiopia and Eritrea, known as the Front Line States (FLS), which aimed at the downfall of Bashir’s regime (Ofcansky 2000:200).²² The signing of the peace agreement (CPA) has changed this situation, as the SPLM/A is now part of the regime in Sudan. The official

²¹ National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A) was the guerilla movement led by Yoweri Museveni who seized power in Uganda in 1986. The government army UPDF is therefore sometimes referred to as NRA.

²² This did not last long, as war broke out between Eritrea and Ethiopia in 1998, and relations between Ethiopia and Sudan improved.

relationship between the GoS and the GoU is thus improving; its future will depend on the implementation of the CPA.

The Relationship between the GoU and the GoS

Uganda has a troubled relationship with Sudan, where both countries have a history of supporting each other's opposition groups. A relevant question is therefore: Are Khartoum and Kampala engaging in war of proxies, thereby turning refugees into instruments of foreign policy?

Historical relations between Uganda and Sudan can be characterized as not amicable, though not always officially directly hostile. Both the Obote regime and the subsequent Amin regime in Uganda supported the Anya Nya rebels in the first civil war in Sudan (Ofcansky 2000:196). Later when Amin's regime fell, pro-Amin soldiers fled to Southern Sudan and launched cross-border raids from refugee camps. The Obote II government in Uganda asked Sudan not to support the pro-Amin soldiers, but Khartoum refused to expel them (idem).

Museveni came to power in 1986. At his inauguration he pledged that his government would represent a 'fundamental change in the politics of our country', and also stated that regional stability and cooperation would be important in Uganda's foreign policy (Ofcansky 2000:196). When Museveni and the NRM/A²³ overthrew the regime of Okello, thousands of UNLA soldiers²⁴ fled to Southern Sudan, where they were received and supported by the GoS. The GoS used the UNLA to defend garrison towns in Southern Sudan against attacks from SPLA (Ofcansky 2000:197). At the same time, UNLA was fighting the NRM/A in cross-border attacks.

In 1987 Museveni went to Khartoum for talks with the GoS. The parties agreed 'Sudan should not allow Ugandan rebels to use its territory as a platform or Uganda to allow Sudanese rebels to stay in its territory' (*Sudan Times*, 14 June 1987, quoted in Ofcansky 2000:197). But despite this agreement, the GoS continued to support anti-Museveni forces inside Sudan and the GoU kept up its support to the SPLA. In 1989 relations between Sudan and Uganda worsened. Officials from the two governments met in Kampala and agreed not to fight along the border, and to move refugee camps at least fifty

²³ National Resistance Movement/Army

²⁴ Uganda National Liberation Army

miles from the border. However, both countries lacked resources and political will to put this agreement into effect. The result was that refugee flows kept crossing the border, the SPLA still received support from Kampala and the GoS kept on supporting anti-Museveni groups in Southern Sudan (Ofcansky 2000:198).

The most problematic rebel movement for Uganda is the LRA, which has been operating from bases in Sudan since the early 1990s. According to Prunier (2004:364), the GoU did not support the SPLA directly until 1993, as Museveni wanted to improve relations with Khartoum. The split in the SPLA after the fall of the Mengistu Regime in Ethiopia strengthened GoS access to the Ugandan border, and initiated support to the LRA (ibid:366). In 1995, troops from the GoU supported an SPLA attack against the towns of Parajok and Magwe, where the GoS held positions (Ofcansky 2000: 199).

This picture had not changed by the time of my fieldwork. The two governments are still negotiating agreements concerning insurgencies, but the on-going peace process between the SPLA and the GoS has improved relations between the two states. Uganda (UPDF) has been allowed to cross into Southern Sudan in fighting the LRA, and the SPLA is supporting the UPDF in fighting against the LRA inside Southern Sudan. The GoU therefore has taken the SPLM/A side in their conflict against the GoS, and this has implications for mobilization. One of my interviewees in Uganda had mobilized soldiers and contributions to the SPLM/A in order to fight against the LRA inside Sudan, in support of the UPDF (interview with primary respondent).

Concluding Remarks

Uganda as a host state for Sudanese refugees influences refugee mobilization through its official refugee policy and administration, and through the GoU's support to the SPLM/A. This means that the host state's policy is contributing to strengthening the SPLM/A's possibilities for mobilization in exile.

The host state, Uganda, defines refugees as a separate group, and requires them to live in separate place, which prevents refugees from local integration and opportunities. As argued in the previous chapter, such isolation of refugees influences mobilization, since the Sudanese are defined and gathered as a group. Livelihood opportunities offered by the host state might make refugees less dependent on the resources offered by mobilization, but when livelihood opportunities are scarce – and this is the situation for most refugees – this

may affect mobilization, making resource opportunities an effective carrot for mobilization.

Most Sudanese refugees in Uganda live in a situation dominated by insecurity. When the host state cannot protect refugees from insecurity, they may have to seek other ways of getting protection. This in turn can provide an opportunity for mobilizing groups to offer measures of protection from within, and may therefore influence the form that such protection takes. An insecure environment can thus fuel military recruitment as a measure for protection.

Refugee mobilization among Sudanese in Uganda is also influenced by the regional situation, where the SPLM/A has become a partner in the UPDF's fight against the LRA, which also corresponds to UPDF support to the SPLM/A's fight against the GoS. This is not necessarily a war of proxy in the sense that the GoU wants to defeat the GoS, but the GoU clearly supports one side of the conflict in Sudan. The situation for Sudanese refugees in Uganda is marked by these regional aspects, and by the host state's support to the SPLM/A, which has contributed to the strong position of the SPLM/A in Uganda.

5) The Exile Community

How is refugee mobilization influenced by political and social factors within the exile community? The chapter begins by describing the various forms of political mobilization within the Sudanese exile community in Uganda. Then the relevance of collective identity in mobilization processes will be discussed. Finally, there is a discussion of the SPLM/A's methods of control and authority, and how this influences refugee mobilization.

In this chapter I choose to talk about 'Sudanese in Uganda' rather than 'Sudanese refugees in Uganda'. In order to explore and understand the dynamics within the exile community I did not want to limit myself to interviewing only those with legal, official refugee status. 'Refugee' pertains first and foremost to various legal entitlements in relation to the international society and host state. Within the exile community, in relations among Sudanese, formal refugee status is not the most significant distinction, although it may matter – for example, if one receives economic benefits or resettlement opportunities from it. What constitutes the term 'exile community' in this thesis is whether people describe themselves as Sudanese. In Uganda, some Sudanese may manage to live as Ugandan, especially if they have money and can pay tax, and particularly if their background is from one of the cross-border groups (interview with key informant). This thesis does not aim at defining exactly what constitutes the 'Sudanese community': the focus is on how processes among Sudanese influence political mobilization.

The Sudanese Exile Community in Uganda

Within the Sudanese community in Uganda one finds a wide range of political involvement, from small local initiatives to the well-organized political and guerrilla movement SPLM/A. Political mobilization activities range from the formation of peace and conflict resolution groups, to the recruitment of soldiers.

The most 'successful' organization in terms of political mobilization is the SPLM/A, which has a predominant position both politically and militarily within the Sudanese exile community. The SPLM/A is therefore the main focus of this analysis, although we should bear in mind that it is not the sole expression of political mobilization among Sudanese in Uganda.

Despite the prohibition on ‘subversive activities’, in both Kenya and Uganda, as we have seen, the SPLA was tolerated – not only its political activities, but also military recruitment. Other groups found it much harder to organise associations for either cultural or development purposes. (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005:200).

The SPLM/A presence in Uganda was visible, among other things, through its office in Kampala, called ‘the Chapter’. There are SPLM/A chapters in many countries outside Sudan – also in Norway. At the chapter/office, members can meet and membership cards are issued. Travel permits to go inside SPLA-controlled areas in Southern Sudan are issued from here. The chapter is also involved in recruitment of soldiers among Sudanese in Uganda. The Kampala office had no signboard outside, and was difficult to find. A representative of the office administration explained that one of their most important jobs was to maintain good relations with the Ugandan authorities. The SPLM/A’s humanitarian wing, the SRRA²⁵, is also present in Kampala, with a separate office. Also this office issues travel permits for rebel-held areas in South Sudan. One of their main tasks is maintain contact with the international NGOs that operate in Sudan, and to approach potential new donors.

One reason why the SPLM/A has acquired a dominant position is that many refugee associations have had difficulties registering with the authorities, which in turn makes it more difficult for them to receive funding from external sources (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005:200). Other organizations among Sudanese in Uganda experienced difficulties in finding resources and mobilizing people for their work. Most common amongst these were organizations focusing on social development issues, like women’s organizations, youth organizations or students’ organizations. Some were organized in relation to a specific area or group in Sudan, for example ‘Upper Nile Youth’ or the ‘Dinka Society’. Others worked to include various groups of Sudanese, like ‘South Sudanese University Students Association’ (SSUSA(ug)) or ‘Sudanese Young Women Empowerment Network’ (SYWEN). SYWEN had actually managed to obtain official registration as an NGO. In 2003 they organized a conference to discuss the peace negotiations, where they challenged the SPLM/A on women’s issues. At the time of my fieldwork, however, the organization lacked funding. Among the organizations for Sudanese in Uganda, the emphasis was put on social and development issues, and focusing on the situation inside Sudan, but avoiding more political questions. The Sudan Human Rights Association (SHRA) differed from these. It published a newsletter, held training sessions on refugee rights and published

reports criticizing human rights abuses committed by the SPLM/A as well as by the host government and the UNHCR (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005:201). Among the Sudanese interviewed in my fieldwork, however, the work of the SHRA was mentioned only by a few university students and educated Sudanese in Kampala. This suggests that their mobilization potential might be limited to the educated elite outside the SPLM/A, and dependent upon external financing.

Religion and churches emerged as an important factor with regard to mobilization among Sudanese in Uganda. Religious leaders and churches may not be a classic example of political mobilization, but within the Sudanese exile community they are important for collective meetings and assembly. There are several examples of associations and small gatherings that take place in churches. This might mean that the church is seen as a practical structure where people can get together: they meet for Mass, and afterwards they can gather for social and political discussions. As an institution, the Church is probably also important not only because it can offer a physical meeting place, but also as a social and religious community, providing protection, assistance and hope for many refugees. This is also why maintaining good relations with the churches has been important for the SPLM/A and vice versa. I return to a discussion of the role of religion and churches later in this chapter.

SLPM/A has a strong political and military position in Uganda, and especially in relation to Sudanese in Uganda. As Johnson (1998) emphasizes, within Sudan the SPLM/A has focused on building up an organization in opposition to the government in Khartoum.

The SPLA has been revolutionary in some of its language but not in its approach. This is because in its origin the SPLA has been defensive: it has attempted to defend the integrity of the South in the face of attempts by a succession of central governments to dismantle Southern administration and subordinate the South politically, culturally and economically. (Johnson 1998:71)

The SPLM/A thus has aimed at including all Southerners and has focused on the struggle against the regime in Khartoum.

Although aiming to be an including organization for Southerners, the SPLM/A has also approached mobilization in a militaristic way, through forced mass- and individual recruitment, which has caused resistance and scepticism. Johnson (1998: 71–72) rejects the notion that the SPLM/A is a centralized military structure, and argues that it is organized

²⁵ Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association, SPLM/A's humanitarian wing.

through semi-autonomous commands, and that locally the organization has worked with native administration, like the chief's court. He sums up the success of the SPLM/A this way:

(...) it has also established the basis for a series of local alliances which not only enabled it to overcome the crisis of internal Southern factionalism, but to link up with former enemies within the nation and the region, placing it at the centre of a formidable political and military alliance pitted against the Islamist government in Khartoum. The leading role now played by the SPLA, an essentially Southern Sudanese army, is unprecedented in post-independence Sudanese politics, and constitutes a revolution in itself. (Johnson 1998:72)

In exile, though, such native and local structures are generally weaker or lacking, and this might have made it easier for the SPLM/A to gain an even stronger position within the exile community. Hence, in Uganda the SPLM/A's 'local alliances' might be the host state and the international refugee regime, making the SPLM/A less dependent on alliances with traditional elders.

The SPLM/A is the dominant organization among Sudanese in Uganda. How has it reached and maintained this position? Previous chapters have shown how SPLM/A has been able to profit from the political opportunity structures in the international refugee regime and the host state; here we focus on how the organization relates to its constituency within the exile community. The SPLM/A's political mobilization among Sudanese in Uganda will be understood and discussed through collective identity processes and methods of control.

Collective Identities and Political Mobilization

Can the SPLM/A's capability to mobilize Sudanese in Uganda be understood through its ability to accommodate a range of different collective identities? These collective identities relate to political, ethnic and religious divisions within the Sudanese exile community. One salient political conflict is between adherents of unity for Sudan, and those favouring the separation of Southern Sudan. The SPLM/A has never taken a clear stance on this issue, but it can be assumed that most of its members are in favour of separatism, while its leaders advocate unity through the notion of 'New Sudan'.

Ethnic divisions are articulated through the oppositions between 'African and Arab', as well as on the level of the various ethnic groups. This is particularly evident when it comes to the Dinka identity and its relation to other identities among the Sudanese. Both these distinctions have had implications for mobilization, as well as having been reinforced

by mobilization processes. Political mobilization and military training has been organized along ethnic lines, as one key informant pointed out when we were discussing challenges in the peace process:

The peace process is crucial especially when it comes to inter-ethnic relations. This has to do with the 'kokora' which is a Bari word signifying 'live where you belong'. I would say that the SPLA all the time has had a policy of kokora. I was a refugee myself in Yei from 1983. And I was captured by the SPLA for military training, and the training was done along ethnic lines. (Key informant, interview in Kampala)

Another key informant pointed out that the GoU also separated the Sudanese refugees along ethnic lines, and he mentioned the concentration of Dinkas in Mireyi settlement as an example (interview, key informant). I will come back to this issue in discussing the Dinka Identity. Finally the role of religion and the relationship between the SPLM/A and the churches and church leaders will be discussed.

Unity versus Separatism

As one key informant pointed out, 'Garang is a minority in the SPLA in not wanting separatism, but the New Sudan' (interview with key informant). Many Sudanese in Uganda (and elsewhere) are separatists wanting an independent South Sudan. They define the war in South Sudan as fundamentally between the North and the South of this vast country, and are convinced that the solution is to split the country in two.

The contrast between unity and separatism is also a question of the relationship between the membership and the leaders in the SPLM/A. However, the possibility of an independent South Sudan is included in the CPA, and it would probably be very difficult politically for the SPLM/A to negotiate without having this possibility included. On the other hand, people are sceptical about the interim period, and express a sense of distrust towards Northerners.

Once the peace is signed leaders have to win the mind of the people to vote for independence. People are desperate for material resources, so my fear is that people can be lured materially to vote for unity. (Interview, primary respondent)

This person is also sceptical about other Southerners. He fears that votes can be bought and that this will determine the outcome of the referendum.

One Sudanese expressed his separatist opinion when asked about the on-going peace process:

Youths don't have anybody at the negotiation table. I am sceptical to the agreement, specifically to the notion of an integrated force, how will these youths be able to serve in the same army and to trust each other? What is the SPLA's philosophy? Separation or unity? South Sudan is not only the SPLA. There is a need for a South to South dialogue on the question of governance. (interview with Zackary)

Zackary also links the question of separation or unity to the issue of governance and power sharing within the South. The question is a political struggle within the movement and between Southerners, and was one reason for the split in the SPLM/A in 1991 (Johnson 1998). Two commanders in the Upper Nile area were central in the Nasir faction: Riek Machar and Lam Akol. Though the reasons for the split were many, a central issue was the separatist agenda. Now the faction has again been incorporated into the SPLM/A, and both Machar and Akol have central positions. After the death of Garang in late July 2005, Machar became vice president of the government of Southern Sudan (GoSS).

One Sudanese in Uganda was with the Nasir faction when it split. He explained the differences between Machar and Garang through their differing perspectives on an independent South:

In 1997 Machar made peace agreement with the GoS but many of the people got corrupted. And the peace accord was disturbed. Now Machar is cooperating with Garang. But Machar say we should divide Sudan according to the British agreement, but Garang he talk about New Sudan. (int7)

'New Sudan' was first used in an SPLM/A manifesto of 1983. What it signified was the new government that the SPLM/A was fighting for, in that they sought to replace the current government in Khartoum (Rolandsen 2005:119). After the split in 1991, where the Nasir faction demanded a separate South Sudan, the concept was not used by the SPLM/A until the National Convention process in 1994. This time, a more separatist meaning of the concept was included, in connection with reference to a referendum on self-determination (Rolandsen 2005:118–22). The separatist agenda was thus included in the concept of New Sudan, although the SPLM/A did not restrict itself to the liberation of South Sudan²⁶ (at least not as defined in the 1956 colonial agreement). 'New Sudan' as a concept was thus politically more malleable than 'South Sudan'. Although the SPLM/A has been vague on

²⁶ The wording of the National Convention Resolution referred to five regions: 'We the people of the New Sudan, represented by this Convention, proclaim the birth of the New Sudan, which for the time being, shall consist of Bahr el Ghazal, Equatoria, Southern Blue Nile, Southern Kordofan and Upper Nile Regions (..)' (as quoted in Rolandsen 2005:121).

the question of separatism, it is become more incorporated in their politics than during the first years of the civil war.²⁷

The effect of competition from the Nasir faction strengthened the separatists' position within the SPLM/A. John Garang found himself in the contradictory position of needing to champion self-determination in order to compete with the Nasir faction for support among southerners, while simultaneously denouncing separatism in order to maintain co-operation with the NDA²⁸. (Rolandsen 2005:42)

The SPLM/A has managed to mobilize both separatists and unionists, but separatists are sceptical about the leadership. This is something that might have changed after Garang's death, when Salva Kiir took over the leadership, with Machar advancing to vice president. Both Kiir and Machar are expected to have a more separatist agenda than Garang. On the other hand, Kiir has underlined that he will follow the implementation of the CPA, which entails a national solution as well as a referendum on separation after an interim period of six years. Thus, an inherent paradox in the CPA is the inclusion of both unity and separatism.

Ethnic Identities and Political Struggles

The Sudanese in Kampala live and organize in relation to ethnicity, which is the baseline for belonging. But it is also a security dimension to this, that they feel safer together with people from the same tribe or clan. So you could say it's a kind of coping mechanism in the situation they're in. (interview, key informant)

Ethnicity is indeed central to the Sudanese in Uganda. This section will discuss how ethnic identities influence mobilization processes.

One Sudanese in Kampala who was deeply involved with the SPLM/A was active in mobilizing soldiers among Sudanese in Uganda. For example, there was an incident during my fieldwork where he received a letter from the SPLA administration in an SPLM/A-governed county in Southern Sudan, requesting the mobilization of soldiers and equipment for them. He was basically asked to mobilize among his own ethnic group. Interestingly he operated in Kampala as well as in refugee settlements in northern Uganda, and across the border in Southern Sudan. As he said: 'I am also involved in mobilizing soldiers and I will be going to a meeting for soldiers in Nimule [Sudan] by the end of this month.' The border area is very porous between Sudan and Uganda, and mobilization activities on both

²⁷ During the first years of the civil war, SPLM/A was also dependent upon support from Mengistu's regime in Ethiopia. As this regime opposed separatism (they were fighting Eritrean separatists) this left little room for support for a separatist SPLM/A.

²⁸ National Democratic Alliance is an umbrella for the northern opposition groups in Sudan.

sides of the border are coordinated. Some of the ethnic groups are cross-border groups as well.

On a general level, SPLM/A policy is to work to unite different groups of Sudanese to work together for the unification of the South, and for peace among Southerners. In practice, however, much of the work is organized along ethnic lines, as it was in the example of the mobilization of one ethnic group. This indicates a tension between wanting to organize the Sudanese with basis in unity, and the practice of organizing and mobilizing along specific ethnic lines.

Ethnicity is also used as a form of resistance and/or scepticism against the SPLM/A through accusations that it is dominated by one group. Thus, a challenge for the SPLM/A is to appear as an organization that can include various identities in order to mobilize broadly among the Sudanese. This section will discuss how ethnic identities shape political mobilization. We focus on the level of the different ethnic identities, with the Dinka Identity as an example, and then on another level concerning the difference between ‘African’ and ‘Arab’.

The Dinka Identity

During my fieldwork I noticed that Sudanese would talk about the characteristics of different ethnic groups, describing people in terms of which ethnic groups they belong to. Most people referred to their ‘home’ place not as the actual place where they were born or grew up, but where they belonged in ethnic terms. The most mentioned ethnic group and most outstanding example was the Dinka.

The biggest challenge for peacebuilding is to reconcile with ourselves. Most people see only one side. Ethnic divisions between the Southerners, especially Dinka/not Dinka. The Dinka are said to be not educated and they are not friends with the Equatorians, but now they have changed and interact more, at least in Rubaga. But they [Equatorians and Dinkas] don’t live together, they live in separate houses, but interact in the different recreation centres around in the neighbourhood. (interview, primary respondent)

Within the Sudanese exile community in Uganda, there exist divisions among the various ethnic groups, but particularly between Dinka and non-Dinka. This quote points to the situation in one urban district of Kampala, but the divisions were even more apparent in Adjumani, in the North. One primary respondent (above) stressed the division between Dinka and Equatorians, but also there exist divisions between Nuer and Dinka:

My worries are the conflicts among the tribes. For example last year there was a big fight in Palorinya [refugee settlement] in Moyo [northern Uganda] between Nuer and Dinka. It was the youth playing cards and then they started insulting each other, it turned into a big fight, and even the women had to run away. OPM was called and arrested some of them. (Interview with UNHCR representative Pakelle Sub Office, Adjumani)

The civil war that erupted between Nuer and Dinka inside Sudan in the 1990s as a result of the 1991 split caused more tension between the groups in exile. Now the situation is calmer and the leaders are reconciled, but suspicions still linger between the groups.

In Adjumani, one of the places I visited was Mireyi refugee camp, where most of the refugees are Dinka. They presented themselves as someone more foreign, and different from other Sudanese refugees. In Mireyi Refugee Camp they told me they were cattle people, not farmers, and therefore couldn't grow their own food; moreover, they are not used to eating beans, which is what they were given by the UNHCR. Mireyi was initially a transit camp established in 1994. Most refugee settlements in Adjumani district are partly self-sustaining, in line with the UNHCR Self Reliance Strategy (Merkx 2000), but Mireyi is completely dependent on food aid (interview with UNHCR representative, Pakelle (Adjumani)). In Adjumani district, Maadi, Acholi and Bari-speaking people (among others) are living. These are groups also found in the Equatoria region across the state border to Sudan. By contrast, the Dinkas originally come from further north in Sudan (from the south and middle of the country).

Interestingly, when I told other people in Adjumani that I had been to Mireyi, several would ask: 'were you afraid?' and they would add that most people in Mireyi are soldiers that used to live in Ethiopia. I did not verify these accusations, but it was true that a few of those I interviewed in Mireyi had been to Ethiopia, and had been soldiers. In a group discussion with some refugees in Mireyi, they explained it this way:

This settlement was created in 1994, and most of the refugees here are youths, and most are Dinka, some are Nuer. We are around 3000 refugees living here. And most of the people living here were refugees in Ethiopia before they came here.' (Group Discussion 3, Mireyi)

Up to 1991 and the fall of Mengistu's regime, Ethiopia hosted many Sudanese refugees. Also the SPLM/A was supported by Ethiopia and operated from bases within the country, and was accused of recruiting among refugees and setting up training camps (Johnson 1998). However, this does not mean that all those Sudanese that were previously in Ethiopia are soldiers, and even if they were, it does not follow that they still are.

Still, especially from Equatorians, the identification of the Dinka with the SPLA was strong, among both Ugandans and Sudanese (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005:128).

‘Mireyi had gained a reputation as a ‘rest and recreation’ for members of the SPLA: armed men could often be seen marching from Mireyi to the border.’ (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005:128). Even though Mireyi was known to be a militarized camp, UNHCR kept placing all Dinka (and Nuer) in this camp, even if they were defecting soldiers. And this in turn probably made young unaccompanied minors especially vulnerable to forced recruitment (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005:204).

I met considerable suspicion and talk about ‘the Dinkas’ in my fieldwork. People would tell me that the Dinkas are harsh, aggressive, arrogant and want to be superior. Like one Sudanese in Adjumani town:

The Dinkas are different. They can disturb you. They are very harsh and proud. They want to decide, and they feel superior. Here I can sit down and talk to my neighbour if he is a Dinka, but once you get to Sudan, they are the ones to decide. And you should not be in their way. Here [in Uganda] they keep to themselves, but not really disturbing us. (Interview, primary respondent)

Many Sudanese had negative attitudes towards Dinkas. Some Equatorians accused them of having started the war, and in 1983 when the war began they initially decided not to participate. Also, some Ugandans who had been refugees in South Sudan in the 1980s remembered SPLA attacks on refugee camps, and had coupled the SPLA with the Dinkas since that time (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005). One Ugandan key informant explained it this way:

In Sudan there was a resentment of the other tribes against the Dinka for having started the war. Especially for the tribes involved in the Anyanya who made a peace agreement. (...)They [SPLA] have several groups in command, but the Dinkas will always decide in practice. Like you will have a Bari Major and a Dinka commander. Their opinion is that all these other Southern tribes descend from Dinkas; they are seeing themselves as the supreme.’ (key informant)

Among several Equatorians, both Ugandan and Sudanese, suspicion and stereotyping of Dinka prevail. One Dinka student said that he had experienced this, and did not feel comfortable with it:

Initially the SPLA was only Dinka. Many people they don’t like Dinka. I meet people here that ran away from the SPLA. Many are suspicious against Dinka. Even in the scholarship, they say it is for minority students, so we are only three Dinka among the 60 Sudanese students, even though we are the largest ethnic group. There are even Dinka dialects that I can’t understand.’ (Int12)

This may imply that there exists a kind of racism against the Dinka. Indeed, Dinka experienced discrimination in health care and rations and scholarships as well (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005:129).

The Dinka issue is rooted in political debates in Southern Sudan. The SPLA leadership has often been criticized of being Dinka-dominated, and their leader John Garang was a Dinka. During the first years of the war the SPLM/A gained considerably less support in Equatoria than elsewhere because they were seen as a Dinka army. Upper Nile and Bahr al-Ghazal, inhabited mostly by Dinka and Nuer, remained the SPLM/A's main recruiting areas (Johnson 1998). But 'Dinka domination' is also a question of sharing power within the South. As one Sudanese in Adjumani told me, even though he was sympathetic towards the movement he was sceptical about 'Dinka domination'. I should add that he himself belonged to one of the ethnic groups of Equatoria.

My other speculation is that are they going to address only the material things? There are some elements of domination. Is it a sufficient theory to explain the Dinka domination with the fact that they are the largest group?' (interview, primary respondent)

Even though the Dinka may have been more involved in fighting, and their identity has become militarized, there has been created a significant distinction between Dinka and others among Sudanese in Uganda, rooted in the view of the Dinka as warriors and as being more foreign. This may prove important when it comes to mobilization. Or – might it also be a result of mobilization?

The stereotyping of Dinka by non-Dinka among the Sudanese in Uganda entailed an essentialist view of what a Dinka is. Interestingly, the Dinka, as opposed to other ethnic groups in Sudan, are in fact not a unified ethnic group – 'the Dinka' consist of a group of tribes (Holt and Daly 2000:3). Also, Dinka people have been found on different sides of national and regional politics in Sudan (Johnson 2003:51).

Ethnic identity was also used as a reason for scepticism to the SPLM/A, as accusations of 'Dinka domination' was used by concurrent groups to challenge the leadership of the movement. Accusation of 'Dinka domination' forms part of a long history of opposition to the SPLM/A, and has also been a means for the Khartoum government to prevent the emergence of a united Southern Sudan (Johnson 2003: 51–53 and 67–69). There have been conflicts between Dinka and Nuer based on ethnicity (Jok and Hutchinson 1999), and there is a history of conflict between Dinka and Equatorians (Branch and Mampilly 2005). In Uganda the conflict between Dinka and Equatorians is dominant, with the latter in the majority.

In Yei (Equatoria), the SPLA was initially perceived by the people as an 'army of occupation' (Johnson 1998:70). The conflict between Equatorians and Dinkas can also be traced back to even before the beginnings of the SPLM/A. For example, General Lagu, the

Anyanya leader (from the first civil war), advocated the re-division of Southern administration, accusing the Dinka of having ‘tried to monopolize the political posts.’ He further stated: ‘It is time we cut the Dinka down to their original size. They must go home, they have nothing to do in Equatoria’ (from Badal 1994:120). These statements were made just before the inception of the SPLA and the beginning of the second civil war.

Recently, when the new Government of South Sudan (GoSS) was appointed, the SPLM/A was criticized for ‘Dinka domination’: Dinkas occupied 45% of the seats but represented only 25% of the Southern population. The criticism also concerned other issues of power sharing within the South with reference to women and other political parties (IRINNEWS Nov 15th 2005). Thus the Dinka identity is also an issue in post-conflict Sudan as well as within the exile community.

The Distinction between African and Arab

Another level of ethnic identity among Sudanese in Uganda relates to the distinction between ‘African’ and ‘Arab’. Among the Sudanese in Uganda, the ‘Arabs’ were the enemy – the GoS – in opposition to ‘the Africans’. In referring to a common enemy, the disparate ethnic groups in Southern Sudan could feel a common identity and common cause in being ‘African’ in opposition to ‘Arab’. Many Sudanese in Uganda considered unity and reconciliation among people in South Sudan as a prerequisite for peace, rather than a national solution and reconciliation that would include both ‘Africans’ and ‘Arabs’.

In Uganda many Sudanese emphasized reconciliation among the Southerners as the most important challenge for peacebuilding, but I did not meet anyone who spoke about reconciling with the ‘Arabs’. The ‘Arabs’ were presented as the common enemy, something the people of the South should unite in opposition to. This is reflected in the words of Rebecca:

I am active in Upper Nile Youth. We are thinking that we, as youth in Kampala, should unite. We want to make unity, as one people. Even though we have different leaders, but we decide to unite. For us black people, the only problem is the Arabs. (...) In the meetings we discuss different issues, like that the youth should unite. We meet in the church, and we are from seven different tribes. (interview with Rebecca)

Rebecca is a young Nuer and the youth organization is a new initiative, created as a consequence of the peace process. When Machar’s Nasir faction split from the SPLA in the early 1990s, war broke out between the Nuer-dominated SPLA-United led by Riek Machar and the Dinka-dominated mainstream SPLA (Jok and Hutchinson 1999). Now that the political leaders are united, possibilities have emerged on the ground for Nuer and

Dinka to organize together, also among young people in exile. This time ‘African’ is used as an identity that forms a basis for mobilization.

‘African’ and ‘Arab’ were also categories referred to in relation to cultural distinctions. This became especially evident when Sudanese were asked about challenges related to a possible post-conflict return to Sudan.

Also there is the problem of those people that stayed with the Arabs they have taken their culture. And people that stayed in Uganda have been accustomed to another culture. So we will need to find a way to reconcile within the community. (Interview, primary respondent)

This indicates the fear of a conflict between those who fled and those who stayed behind. In addition there are Southerners who fled northwards, who for example lived outside Khartoum. Some of them had education and working experience in Arabic.

Arabization has been an active policy on the part of the GoS (Holt and Daly 2000) especially through language and Islamization processes, particularly evident in the educational system. A Sudanese teacher in Uganda emphasized this as a challenge for post-conflict Sudan. I then asked him which language he would want for the educational system in Sudan, and he answered:

In English, but with freedom for Arabic. Many people from South they have education from the North, and they feel proud they know the classical Arabic. Now the university in Juba is moved, they said they reopened one section, but the mujahedin militia are still in Juba and in Torit. They are working with the GoS. (Interview, primary respondent)

Sudanese in Uganda have received their education in English, and most refugees have had access to primary education (though of varied quality)²⁹. In a post-conflict South Sudan there might be a conflict of job interests in deciding which language to use in a new school system.

The term ‘Arab’ was also used with reference to the government in Khartoum, and to express distrust towards it:

Also I am sceptical about the peace. Arabs, they will pretend to be good during the interim period but after independence they will not behave good. You know after repatriation people can move freely, for example they can go to the capital, so they can come and convince people just to attract their minds. In this interim period we should be careful in handling these Arabs so that they know what will happen. When they campaign they will not do it empty handed. (Interview, primary respondent)

²⁹ For further information about refugees education opportunities in Uganda see Dryden-Peterson (2003)

In addition to expressing scepticism towards ‘Arabs’, reference is made to the separation–unity discussion as well. The assumption is that ‘Arabs’ would want unity, and that they will act in an ingratiating way with Southerners so that they will vote for unity.

The distinction between Arab and African also came up in an interview while discussing the on-going peace process and the three disputed areas:

How is the peace process going? Now there are difficulties with the three disputed areas. *Why are these areas disputed?* R: We are Africans we have to preserve our culture and identity. The people living in these areas, they are fighting with the SPLA now. They wrote a pan African petition, you can get it at the pan African movement office. (Interview, primary respondent)

The distinction between African and Arab is a complex one in Sudan, particularly in central areas of the country. In most cases it is difficult to tell the difference merely by looking at people, due not least to many generations of intermarriage. This is for example the case for Darfur (Flint and de Waal 2005). The distinction, thus, is basically political, and needs to be seen in relation to political developments in Sudan. Holt and Daly (2000) emphasize the division between North and South, and African and Arab, as essential to an understanding of Sudan’s history:

There exists a broad distinction, which is nevertheless slowly being modified by the processes of history, between the northern and southern parts of the modern Sudan. The north is, with certain important exceptions, Arabic in speech, and its peoples are largely arabized in culture and outlook. Its indigenous inhabitants are universally Muslim; a minority of Arabic-speaking Christians is composed of the descendants of immigrants from Egypt and Lebanon since the Turco-Egyptian conquest. The southern Sudan contains a bewildering variety of ethnic groups and languages. Unlike the northerners, its peoples are not generally Muslims, nor do they claim Arab descent; although there has been some degree of islamization and arabization. These tendencies were restrained during the Condominium period, when European and American missionaries effected a limited christianization of the region. (Holt and Daly 2000:2–3)

Although the North/South, African/Arab divisions are important in Sudan, it is equally important to realize that it is only one of many political divisions in contemporary Sudan (Branch and Mampilly 2005:4).

The SPLM/A aim at including both people that define themselves as Arabs and as African culturally – the over-arching aim is to fight the Khartoum government. The SPLM/A has first and foremost mobilized among Southerners, but also formed alliances with Northern opposition parties. How deep these alliances really go, however, is questionable.

Religion and the Role of the Church

Especially in Western media, the civil war in Sudan is sometimes portrayed as a war between Muslims and Christians. This is a simplification, yet religion is one dimension of conflict in the Sudan. For many Sudanese refugees in Uganda, Christianity is something that can unite them, and the church and the religious community have become important in exile.

Every first Sunday of the month there is a Catholic service for Sudanese in one of the cathedrals (Rubaga) in Kampala. The service is conducted in Arabic and led by Sudanese priests. I attended one of these and was introduced to the community at the end of the service by one of the priests. During the mass, he spoke about the peace process and how important it was for the Sudanese community to reconcile and support the peace process. This particular Sunday the congregation counted only around 60 people, but I was told that there were usually more. The priest said that he cooperates well with the Ugandan pastors, and added that sometimes churchgoers from both Sudan and Uganda attend the same services. However, one key informant told me that although there is a good relationship and cooperation between Sudanese and Ugandan pastors, there is not much contact with the Ugandan Catholic community. He also added that the Anglican [or Episcopal] Church had a refugee desk in West Nile.

The religious community is important for many Sudanese refugees. Another key informant described the role of the church within the Sudanese community in Uganda this way:

Both the Episcopal Church and the Catholic Church have been important for the community. They have social programmes and they have given hopes to the refugees. Especially for the most desperate ones, the church provides a sense of hope. To the extent possible they also provide a lot of help to people. The church has also been a meeting point. And they have been involved in peace processes. The SPLA respects them and see that they have power. And the church and the SPLA are separate structures. However, some individuals are deeply into the SPLA, that is also why the church couldn't protect people against abuses and to speak up against Human Rights violence committed by the SPLA. But part of the Catholic Church defines themselves as part of the struggle, based on liberation theology. (interview with key informant)

As pointed out in this quote, the church is an important institution and the Christian community provides hope, comfort and aid for many Sudanese refugees. Churches and the community also provide a place to gather. In Adjumani I also went with Sudanese to attend a church service, and this time the church was overcrowded. Many of those I talked to expressed the importance of the church as a meeting place. Some organizations and youth groups used a church for meetings and the religious community as a point of

departure for organizing. Churches also have social programmes, support and education grants.

One priest I interviewed in Kampala was also organized in the SPLM/A and an active recruiter for the organization. He was a refugee in Uganda, but also an ex-soldier. This suggests that there are close ties between the SPLM/A and the church, although the church and the SPLM/A are separate structures.

The SPLM/A's relationship with churches changed with the Islamist NIF³⁰ coup in Sudan in 1989 and the establishment of Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) the same year. Until then, the SPLM/A had been perceived as being hostile towards the church (African Rights 1995:7). The Sudan Council of Churches (SCC), who gathered churches in Sudan in an ecumenical forum coordinated from Khartoum, had difficulties in reaching out to churches in South Sudan (apart from government-controlled areas) when the second civil war broke out. In 1990 the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) was formed, with the Roman Catholic Bishop Paride Taban as leader (Rolandsen 2005:75). The NSCC worked from Nairobi and in the SPLA-controlled areas in South Sudan. Christianity thus became a more salient identity for Southerners. This was also linked to national and international events like the Islamist coup in Sudan in 1989 and the end of the Cold War. These events opened up a space for a shift of alliances in international politics. Whereas the SPLM/A had been a Marxist-inspired rebel group allied with Mengistu in Ethiopia, and the regime in Khartoum was supported by USA, this changed after 1990. The SPLM/A has gained increased support from the USA in its fight against an Islamic regime, and especially Christian organizations in the USA have been important pressure groups and active advocates for Sudan, focusing on the religious dimensions of the conflict.

The formation of the NSCC was encouraged by the SPLM/A, partly as a reaction against Islamization, and partly as a strategy for the delivery of humanitarian aid and improved goodwill on the part of Western donors (Rolandsen 2005:76). However, the SPLM/A has since then seen church organizations and the NSCC in particular as a challenger to its own 'position as the legitimate spokesperson of the Southern People.' (Rolandsen 2005:76). The question of its legitimacy as a movement for Southerners is a central question. It has therefore been important for the SPLM/A to respect and include the churches in its social work, while also keeping control of its political and social position.

³⁰ National Islamic Front

Sudanese Muslim refugees were a minority in Uganda. There are Muslim communities in most parts of Uganda, and particularly after the Idi Amin period the number of Muslims in Uganda rose. Thus, on the part of the host state, there was no particular discrimination of Muslims. However, some Muslim refugees felt discriminated against and threatened by the SPLM/A. One example is this family, who lived in Mongola, a settlement in Adjumani district:

(...) they are saying we Muslims have our names registered in the SPLA offices and we are considered as collaborators of the Islamic North [the government of Sudan], the Christians consider themselves as the 'genuine' ones collaborating with the SPLA. (...) (quoted in Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005:127)

Even though the SPLM/A is careful not to announce itself as a Christian organization, Muslims are a minority in the movement, and they might feel discriminated against or at least not entirely included.

However, it has also been important to the SPLM/A to function as an organization for Muslims who oppose the Islamist regime. Many 'African' Sudanese are Muslim, as is the case for example with populations in the Nuba mountains and in Darfur region. And many Southerners are neither Christians nor Muslims, but adhere to traditional religions. The SPLM/A therefore has tried not to focus on Christianity, in order to be able to include these differences. At the same time, though, a 'nearness' to Christianity and the Christian community has been important both inside Sudan, and for international support.

Multiple Identities and Political Mobilization

Multiple identities that are mutually reinforcing or excluding play a significant role in mobilization and in how the SPLM/A relates to its constituency. The SPLM/A has tried not to emphasize with one or the other, presenting itself as a broadly based organization (at least in its official policy), in order to accommodate the various views and be an attractive organization for all Southerners as well as for all Sudanese opposed to the Khartoum government.

There are political, ethnic and religious divisions within the exile community, and the SPLM/A has tried to accommodate the opposites in order to mobilize. Particularly challenging is ethnicity. As Tvedt (1994) pointed out in his study of local civil administration in Southern Sudan, ethnicity as social category has been a major obstacle to building a viable government structure.

In southern Sudan, where ethnic groups as social categories have been more important than social class, one of the paramount problems in building up administration has been one of 'ethnic arithmetic' (Tvedt 1994:88).

Ethnic identities and conflict between these may well prove an important challenge for the SPLM/A also in post-conflict Sudan.

Collective identities are also a way of understanding the linkage between the individual, his or her social belonging/boundaries and the forming of collective political claims. Political claims are often set forth on behalf of a collective. Collective identities thus can be a person's link to the political sphere.

Interestingly, we have seen that most identities – political, ethnic, religious – are defined oppositionally – in contrast or opposition to another identity. Conflicting identities may also reflect political conflicts, and different levels of identities may try to overcome these conflicts.

Methods of Control and Authority

For many Southern Sudanese in Uganda, the SPLM/A is an important movement to support as an alliance against the common enemy, 'the Arabs'. It has been the strongest force from Southern Sudan in the war against the Government of Sudan (GoS). With the Naivasha peace negotiations, the SPLM/A has been consolidating its power within the South of Sudan, making the movement a political force that all Sudanese in Uganda have to relate to in one way or another. Either as an enemy, something one chooses to distance oneself from, or as a political force to support partly, though with scepticism, or as a political force to get deeply involved in. The strong position of the SPLM/A within the Sudanese exile community in Uganda is due partly to its ability to accommodate different identities and offer a political movement for Sudanese (especially Southerners) opposed to the GoS – and it is also due in part to the military force of the SPLM/A. It has achieved its position not only through political measures, but also through military and authoritarian means.

In this section we focus on the military elements of the movement's relation to the exile community, looking at methods of control, the use of force and violence, and threats of violence. Many Sudanese refugees in Uganda are fleeing from atrocities committed by the SPLM/A (Kaiser 2000), and it has been seen as a movement with authoritarian tendencies (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005).

The SPLM/A is a military organization – initially primarily a guerrilla one, but in recent years it has had to develop more political and civilian structures, in the territories it has occupied and governed (Rolandsen 2005), and as a partner in the peace process. Although some of the SPLM/A's political views are attractive to many Sudanese in Uganda, it is experienced as a military organization, and this has consequences for mobilization.

How, then, have the SPLM/A's methods of control influenced and shaped refugee mobilization? The use of sticks and carrots in mobilization is important. In the following analysis, central topics are top-down organization, military decision structures, forced recruitment and insecurity.

Top-Down

Discussing the peace process with Sudanese refugees in Uganda, I was always met with a lot of questions. There was obviously a great need for information about the content of the agreement. Many Sudanese said they wanted updates about the negotiations from their leaders. In Uganda, the chapter has the mandate to inform on the peace process. Basically, information was spread through distribution of the Nairobi-based weekly newspaper *The Sudan Mirror*, a publication highly sympathetic to the SPLM/A. Sudanese in Uganda acquired other information about the peace negotiations through the media (local radio or BBC). Very many people felt that they had not been given a say in the peace negotiations. Often, when meeting with people or interviewing someone, I was asked to explain the status of the negotiations and give my opinions and expectations about the outcome.

One of the interviewees, Edward, presented himself as a link between the Sudanese community and the SPLM/A leaders. He lives in a neighbourhood in Kampala populated by many Sudanese. By organizing social meetings and gatherings among different groups in the Sudanese society, he tries to bring people together across ethnic lines. He also tries to recruit members to the movement. Yet he is not always very happy about the way the organization works: 'I report my activities and the activity on the ground to the chapter, the SPLM, and to SRRA, but I get very little information back from them', he said. Thus, he was disappointed about how little information he got from the leaders, though at the same time he was expected to report upwards. Especially he was met with demands and expectation among people on the ground, expecting him to provide more information on behalf of the movement. Edward found it difficult to mobilize support and contributions

for SPLM/A activities among the grassroots without being able to give anything in return. ‘You can’t climb a tree from the top’, he said, referring to a Sudanese saying.

The SPLM/A is organized hierarchically, with decisions coming from above. On the one hand, this may leave little room for the opinions of a wide range of members, but on the other, it might enhance the authority of the organization.

Military Decision Structures

John, a Sudanese student, expressed his concerns about returning to a post-conflict Sudan because of the militarization of SPLM/A decision structures and civil government:

You know all the medical doctors working for the movement, they are trained as military, they have a rank. Because you need a rank to get responsibility. One person with no education, but a high military rank can have more responsibility than an educated person like me. This is what I fear. And they can do what they want, if you are in their way. (interview with John)

Noticeably, John feels threatened by the power of the military, and this is a concern for him for the future. However, this quote does not say anything substantial about what will happen in the future, about how the SPLM/A will actually govern a post-conflict South Sudan. But it does indicate something about perceptions, previous experience and the history of how the SPLM/A is organized.

Fears and expectations about the civil administration were an issue that came up in many instances when I asked refugees about return and about challenges in post-conflict Sudan. Another refugee, Daniel, mentioned the same problem in relation to the distribution of land:

Dispute over land will be a problem. Like for example my brother, he was a refugee in Central Africa, and when he came back there was a soldier staying on his land. My brother went with his papers to the civil authorities, but they told him that those who run away can’t claim land. I told my brother to keep his documents and wait, because maybe, when there is real peace, he can get the land back. If he had insisted now, I believe they would have killed him. (interview with Daniel)

Daniel was also sceptical about the militaristic traits among the SPLM/A authorities, and feels threatened. However, he seems more optimistic about the future – ‘when there is real peace’.

The SPLM/A seek to control Sudanese refugees in Uganda. In Kampala and in the various refugee settlements, they have posted intelligence and security persons to keep an eye on activities. Their presence is known and more or less articulated: sometimes they will announce who they are, sometimes people just know, and at times they are clandestine. One key informant emphasized that it was important for the SPLM/A to have

representatives in the Refugee Welfare Committees: ‘The SPLA have representatives in most camps in the RWC, so that they have easy access to the refugees.’ (key informant)

Many of my interviews and other reports indicate that SPLM/A representatives are present in most refugee camps in Uganda.³¹ Especially in refugee camps close to the border, SPLM/A activities have been strong. Many soldiers keep their wives and children in the camps and visit regularly. (Hovil, 2001) There have also been recruitment activities in the camps. One Sudanese, Joseph, told me about his stay in a refugee camp in northern Uganda:

In the camp I was executive representative in the youth mobilization group for the SPLA. That means that I was like intelligence. I was moving around socializing with people to get to know what was happening. I was to report to the chairman in the camp, who again reported to Kampala, who again reported to Sudan. The thing is that the Arabs had three intelligence people present in the camp. (interview with Joseph)

Joseph, who was recruited and worked for the SPLM/A in the camp, pointed out that representatives of the GoS (‘the Arabs’) also had intelligence operations in the camps. This suggests that also GoS was active in recruitment within the Sudanese exile community, but I was not able to interview anyone who was directly involved in this. And the position of the SPLM/A was much stronger, as previously mentioned. Joseph also wanted to join the SPLM/A as a soldier and receive military education. However, he did not want to go for training inside Sudan first, because he was afraid that they send all newcomers to the frontline, where they would be easy targets.

When I was in the camp I asked them to take me to military school. They said they could take me to Tanzania, or Korea, but first I would have to do military training in Sudan. But my mother say no. In the village in Sudan the SPLA used to come to a group of people and pick young men, and take them by force.

Joseph’s story points to the resource side of a militarized organization: it can bestow positions and authority. At the same time militarization involve risks, violence and threats, and this might make people shun the organization.

Forced Recruitment

The SPLA recruited refugees more or less forcibly from refugee camps in both Kenya and Uganda (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005:174–5). ‘In Uganda, it was even worse. Settlements usually had an SPLA recruiting officer in residence, and recruitment drives

³¹ One exception might be a refugee camp in western Uganda, which has been specially designed for security cases: see ‘Forced Recruitment’, below.

were recurrent. The SPLA even wrote to individual refugees in settlements to remind them of their military duties.’ (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005:175).

In Adjumani district, where some of the fieldwork for this thesis was conducted, there had previously been incidents of coercive mass recruitment, especially in the mid- and late 1990s (Hovil, 2001). However, it seems that forced recruitment of large groups of people has now ended in the district – probably as a result of international pressure and the SPLM/A wanting to improve its image. All the same, small groups or individuals might still experience forced recruitment.

The practice of rounding up and forcibly recruiting civilians is something that several of the interviewees had experienced in their home villages in Sudan as well.

I was abducted by the SPLA as a child in 1986 and brought to Ethiopia, in a refugee camp for military training. When there was a regime change in Ethiopia, we were taken to Sudan. Then Machar split with the SPLA. I was with Machar. After the split the SPLA would kill all Nuer in the SPLA. (interview, primary respondent)

This refugee, a Nuer living in Uganda, is still marked by his experiences. Even though Machar and Garang later re-united, he has remained suspicious about the SPLA in exile.

Simon, a Sudanese I interviewed in Kampala, was registered in a refugee camp for security cases in Hoima³² in western Uganda, further from the Sudan border. Simon had fled the SPLA: this was something he did not mention initially, but it came up later. He also avoided talking about how he got to Kampala. He told me that people fleeing from the SPLA could not feel safe in Uganda, but that the peace talks had improved the situation at least temporarily:

Many people they fled from the SPLA, and it is not always safe for people like us in Uganda, because Garang and Museveni they are friends. Now it is better because of the peace talks, but there were days when they would take people and bring them to the Sudan.

This suggests that abductions and forced recruitment happen not only in camps close to the border, but also elsewhere, even in Kampala. This is supported by other studies as well (HRW 2002, Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005, Bernstein 2005). Some Sudanese refugees living in Kampala who were SPLA deserters feared reprisals from the SPLA. Therefore they did not register with Ugandan authorities for refugee status, fearing that the information would be handed over to the SPLM/A, or that they would be forced to live in

³² Kyangwali settlement in Hoima district was designated for ‘security cases’, like people fleeing from the SPLA, but Kyangwali was not completely safe, as conflicts between refugees occurred and the SPLA was even present (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005:157).

refugee settlements in northern Uganda which ‘is not safe because of the SPLA’ (Bernstein 2005:23). There has also been the SPLA expectation that each family will ‘donate’ one child to the movement, and individuals were singled out to go and fight in Sudan (Hovil 2001:12–13). One study documented accounts of house-to-house raids for mass mobilization in Kampala and a mobilization raid organized in Adjumani with the assistance of the UPDF (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005: 176–177).

Varying degrees of forced recruitment have characterized some of the SPLM/A’s mobilization activities in exile as well as in Sudan. In these instances, mobilization is reduced to coercion.

Carrots

On the other hand, the SPLM/A as a military organization is not solely an oppressive organization: it is also an attractive one. Being a soldier in the SPLM/A can mean gaining a position and a role, and in some cases may offer access to resources. As mentioned, in Uganda the SPLM/A (and its humanitarian branch, the SRRA) issues travel permits and documents to go inside Sudan. Also, in case of conflicts connected to returning, a position within the SPLM/A might provide advantages (as indicated in the story told by Daniel above, where a soldier stayed on a returnee’s land). As this Sudanese indicates, conflicts related to return seem likely:

Now people are divided; there are the ones that are in exile, then there are the ones that have resisted in the war zones, those that stayed with the Arabs, and those that are outside, in Europe or America. The problem they are facing now in Kajo Keji [Sudan] is that the people that stayed behind are saying things like ‘you people have not taken part in the struggle, now you have come back to have the advantages’ (Interview, primary respondent)

In this situation, it is possible that the SPLM/A can provide protection for return, or at least enhance one’s opportunities in the place of return.

There might also be instances where refugees choose to join the SPLM/A as a way of coping with insecurity. For refugees who are subject to violent attacks from the LRA or others, joining the SPLA might be a form of self-defence.

I wanted to go to military school, but if you go for military training in Sudan first, they send you to the front line. In the training we were supposed to learn driving tanks, piloting, radio call, and so. Other refugees they went, some of them are dead now. Especially refugees that were in Achol-Pii, they were attacked by the rebels and they said ‘if they come again what can we do? We are only refugees we have no gun’ That’s why many people they go to Sudan to fight. (interview, primary respondent)

In an environment like the one experienced by Sudanese refugees in Uganda, where insurgency and military activities are a constant security threat, political space and actions

are violent. The insurgency in northern Uganda affects Sudanese refugees living in those areas, and, as I was told, ‘we have no arms, how can we defend ourselves?’ (interview, primary respondent). For some people, this insecure environment can justify joining one of the armed groups, for protection.

And some, like me I came here at about 15, I had a gun when I came. They [the SPLA] gave me a gun when I left Palutaka to go to Uganda because the LRA was attacking us, and they told me ‘nobody can protect you’, so they gave me a gun. (Interview, primary respondent)

The SPLM/A as military and violent organization functions both in favour of, and as an obstacle to, mobilization. Paradoxically, engaging in violence can present itself as a self-defence strategy if one is confined to an insecure environment.

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter we have focused on various factors within the Sudanese exile community and how they influence political mobilization. The analysis has revolved around a discussion of how the SPLM/A has been the most ‘successful’ organization in exile. Two themes have been important in this regard: collective identity and methods of control and authority.

A central topic has been how the SPLM/A tries to accommodate multiple identities in order to include most Sudanese. Our discussion of collective identities and mobilization has shown that political demands are linked to collective identities. We also noted how collective identities have been shaped by political mobilization. Multiple identities are important: people can adhere to several identities, and these can become relevant in various situations. In addition, we have seen that identities are dynamic and flexible, rather than being constant, inherent and essential traits.

The section analysing methods of control and authority has pointed to issues of force and power, and the role of sticks and carrots in mobilization. An interesting insight to emerge from this was that an insecure environment may lead to military recruitment being seen as an attractive measure for protection. This in turn could lead to another question: do sticks and carrots create different kinds of mobilization? Do the different measures create different types of loyalties? However, these issues are beyond the scope of the present study.

Understanding the various political and social divisions within the exile community is important for understanding refugee mobilization. The findings presented in this chapter

underline that, apart from understanding the role of the international refugee regime and the host state, processes *within* the exile community itself are also important in analysing political mobilization among refugees.

6) The Dynamics of Refugee Mobilization

We have seen how refugee mobilization among Sudanese in Uganda has been influenced by the role of the international refugee regime, the Ugandan host state and by processes within the exile community itself. Analyses in the previous chapters have shown that all the three factors are significant for understanding political mobilization among refugees. In different ways, the international refugee regime, the host state and the exile community all influence and shape refugee mobilization. The mobilization carried out by the SPLM/A in exile provides a good example of this.

This study is meant as a complement to existing literature that describes the phenomenon of refugee mobilization by analysing the role of the refugee regime and the host state. While contributing to useful insights to the role of these factors, this literature has tended to underestimate the significance of social and political processes within the exile community itself. In describing ‘Refugee Warrior Communities’, Zolberg et al. (1989:275–278) depict a refugee community with a leadership structure and armed section that often build on structures that existed before the flight, as when an entire society has been displaced (as in the case of the Palestinians) or when members of the *ancien regime* constitute the hub of the community (as with the Nicaraguan Contras in Honduras). However, questions concerning processes and differences within the exile community have not been addressed, thereby tacitly implying the existence of a homogeneous refugee collective. Along the same lines, Lischer (2003) focuses on militarization of refugees and analyses various categories of refugees in order to assess their potential for militarization. She introduces the concept of ‘state in exile’ refugees, defined according to the origin of the crises. State in exile refugees are brought in exile by the leadership as a war strategy against the sending state; these refugees are more likely to control and divert humanitarian aid than other categories of refugees (Lischer 2003:92–93). She cites the example of Hutu refugee camps in Zaire in the aftermath of the genocide as a ‘state in exile’ refugee situation. The notion of a ‘state in exile’ is interesting as it might point to the social and political organization within the exile community, directing attention to governing processes between the leadership and the refugees as relevant for understanding mobilization. However, the analysis of Lischer’s study focuses on the role of host states and the international refugee regime.

Studies of refugee mobilization are also linked to studies of rebel movements in general. One common understanding of rebel movements is to see them as instruments for the proxy wars of states. Prunier (2004) focuses on this, thereby reducing rebel movements to foreign-policy tools for governments – and this is relevant for discussions on the role of the host state. Adelman (1998) has argued that if refugee organizations are fighting on behalf of the host state, they are not refugee warriors, but actors in an interstate war. However, although rebel movements may receive support from other states, these states do not necessarily control them directly.

Insurgent organizations must nonetheless be created on the ground, to an appreciably greater extent than any other form of African political organization, and it is plausible to assume that they must be constructed in large part from the social materials that they find there. Understanding insurgencies is thus to an appreciable extent a job for the political anthropologist. (Clapham 1998:11).

Thus, rebel movements and political organizations need to be understood also with regard to their relation to the constituency, and in the case of refugee mobilization the relation to the exile community. The present study has shown that, in the case of the SPLM/A, both the dynamics within the exile community as well as the role of the host state and the exile community are important and significant factors for understanding refugee mobilization.

Interaction between the Factors

In this thesis, the three factors of the international refugee regime, the host state and the exile community are distinguished on the analytical level, to enable an analysis of their differing influences on refugee mobilization. In this section I discuss how and when the three factors interact and mutually reinforce (or weaken) refugee mobilization.

Although generally focusing on the international refugee regime and host state only, some of the literature on refugee mobilization can provide useful illustrations of the interplay between these two factors. One example concerns the situation among Afghan refugees in Pakistan, where affiliation to specific political parties recognized by the host state was required in order to obtain refugee status, food and shelter in the refugee camp (Terry 2002:67). This gave the political parties an opportunity to mobilize members through their control over refugee resources, with the cooperation of the Pakistani host state. Thus, opportunities for refugee mobilization were enabled by the international refugee regime and the host state.

In the present study, an illustrative example of interaction among all three factors concerns the Dinka refugees living in Mireyi refugee camp in Adjumani. In Sudan, Dinkas come from the core areas for SPLM/A mobilization, and they represent the largest group in southern Sudan. Both UNHCR and the host state often define them as SPLM/A adherents. Mobilization activity has been frequent in this camp, more or less tolerated on the part of the host state and the international refugee regime. Moreover, many Dinka refugees were automatically placed in this camp, even if they were SPLM/A defectors (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005). The camp was situated close to the border and was dependent on food distribution. Within the exile community, Dinkas were often treated with scepticism by other Sudanese, especially Equatorians. This exclusion within the exile community, as well as structures and behaviour on the part of the host state and the international refugee regime, served to mutually strengthen the Dinka mobilization in the SPLM/A. In this sense, the opportunity structure might have reinforced a collective identity and vice versa, and the interplay among the factors thereby influenced refugee mobilization.

On the more general level, SPLM/A mobilization among Sudanese in Uganda is in itself an example of the interaction among the three factors. In Uganda, the SPLM/A mobilize within refugee camps; they are supported by the host state, and even mobilize Sudanese in Uganda to aid the UPDF fighting the LRA in Sudan. Thus both the international refugee regime and the host state influence SPLM/A mobilization, strengthening the SPLM/A's position within the exile community. At the same time, cultural and political processes within the exile community act to influence mobilization. The SPLM/A sometimes uses block recruitment, where mobilization follows ethnicity. It is also important for the SPLM/A to handle and accommodate the various political divisions in order to mobilize Sudanese. Thus, SPLM/A mobilization is strengthened by the interaction of the three factors.

Another aspect of interaction between the factors relates to how the factors contribute to the militarization of political space. This study has shown how violence has become a dominating element in socio-political reality and in the processes of mobilization, and how each factor contributes to this. The international refugee regime presents military solutions to refugee mobilization, and strives to present political solutions and secure a political space for refugees. The Ugandan host state does not allow political activity among refugees – apart from SPLM/A activity, where military activity and cooperation is frequent. Within the exile community, mobilization processes are also characterized by military methods and shaped by insecurity. Processes of militarization of

political space also make it difficult to draw a distinction between ‘military’ and ‘political’. Refugees are both, and in-between – victims and warriors.

Synthesizing the Theories?

Within social movement theories Political Opportunity Structures and Collective Identity theories represent two different traditions. The two are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but can provide a complementary understanding of political mobilization. A focus on Political Opportunity Structures directs attention towards the political institutions and authorities outside a given movement, whereas the Collective Identity perspective enables analysis of processes within the movement and the movement’s relations with its constituency. One way of understanding the two positions is to relate them to different spheres within society. In this sense, Political Opportunity Structure describes political mobilization in relation to an institutional sphere, while Collective Identity describes it in relation to a social/cultural sphere. From the analysis presented in this thesis, I would argue that it is necessary to grasp the processes within both of these spheres in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of political mobilization. Polletta and Jasper (2001) present a similar view, but refer to the difference between the traditions as a difference in focus on external and internal factors that influence mobilization. In addition they relate the division between external and internal to a difference between formal and informal processes. These are relevant concepts, but for the purposes of this thesis I find the notion of an institutional sphere and social/cultural sphere to be more precise.

Processes of inclusion and exclusion in the case of Sudanese refugees in Uganda illustrate the importance of both spheres. Processes of inclusion and exclusion proved important in relation to the international refugee regime and the host state, and were linked to settlement, livelihood and insecurity. In a different sense, collective identity entails processes of exclusion and inclusion where social boundaries between people are defined and redefined. In the case of Sudanese, this became relevant in relation to political, ethnic and religious divisions. For example, a Sudanese might experience exclusion from the international refugee regime in being confined to a remote settlement in an insecure area, but at the same time be included in a community based on his/her ethnic affiliation. This community might in turn form the basis for resistance or mobilization against the authorities.

Processes of inclusion and exclusion are thus manifested in various forms within the different spheres, and the dynamics of political mobilization should encompass an analysis of both. In this sense, both theories of Political Opportunity Structure and Collective Identity can serve to shape a more complete analysis of political mobilization when seen together.

The SPLM/A's Dual Position

One thing that has puzzled and confused me throughout this study is the dual position of the SPLM/A. Having studied the relationship of that organization to both the host state and its constituency, I realized that the SPLM/A is not only a result of mobilization processes, but also acts as an authority that shapes mobilization among other organizations within the Sudanese exile community.

In conditions where states are weak and have neither a monopoly on violence nor territorial control, insurgency movements might, at least on the ground, be as significant authorities as states. During the time of my fieldwork, the SPLM/A controlled areas in Southern Sudan where it had set up governing structures, thereby representing a kind of state authority in parts of the South. Furthermore, the peace negotiations had brought the SPLM/A international recognition as a legitimate political leadership of South Sudan. The result of the negotiations was that in 2005 the SPLM/A formed the Government of South Sudan (GoSS).

Not only the SPLM/A but other guerrilla movements in the Horn of Africa have assumed such state functions as civil administration and court systems; they have delivered humanitarian aid, had diplomatic relations abroad, and collected taxes. In all these respects, guerrillas have taken over tasks otherwise typical of the state (Borchgrevink 2004), which again indicates that we need to question the underlying assumptions about a state in this setting. Similarly, studies of insurgency movements need to include an analysis of how these movements have assumed state functions.

The SPLM/A is challenging the authority of the state in Sudan, but in exile it has not been challenging Uganda as a state, nor contesting its borders. On the other hand, the SPLM/A has, to a certain extent, gained authority over Sudanese in Uganda. It could therefore be argued that the SPLM/A-governed areas extended into the refugee camps in Uganda. Surely this has not taken place without some degree of consent from the Ugandan authorities, yet it is difficult to assume that GoU can really control SPLM/A activities vis-

à-vis the Sudanese in Uganda. An illustrative example comes from Adjumani during an incident of mass forced recruitment by the SPLM/A in 1999, where the UPDF seemingly collaborated, while the Refugee Desk Officer (also representing GoU) entered into negotiations with the SPLM/A and managed to secure the release of 41 of the 81 who had been loaded into a truck to be taken to South Sudan (Hovil 2001:11).

This also has consequences for the international refugee regime. The anthropologist Wendy James (2001) points to the contradictions between how international humanitarian aid agencies view the refugee situation, and the actual political and military situation under which the refugees are living. She has studied communities on the borderland between Sudan and Ethiopia for decades, and documents how people living in borderlands have been forced to take sides due to the shifting control of the different armies and guerrillas (such as the SPLM/A, TPLF, EPLF, OLF, and the government armies of Sudan and Ethiopia) in garrison towns in the border area. James criticizes aid agencies for not being able to understand the political setting in which the refugees are forced to live.

Aid workers and those who write reports directly for humanitarian agencies have to keep their gaze focused on the target beneficiaries alone, and the boundaries of the scheme they are reporting on; but from economic, political, moral and cultural points of view alike, the people of these schemes are tied into a wider set of relations. These relations are ultimately more important to the survival and welfare of most refugee populations than the assistance they get intermittently from the international community, whether aimed at material or (even more clearly) moral welfare (James 2001:31).

She found that, in most instances, access to refugee assistance was contingent upon on one form of local patronage, for example the SPLM/A (James 2002:272). Her studies (2001, 2002) reveal that refugees in borderlands may find themselves subject to different ‘state-like’ authorities, and be forced to choose where to place their loyalties. Among the Uduk community that James followed for many years, people joined different rebel movements or government armies. In this sense, ‘[T]hey too have been not simply victims, but at various times victors of struggles at specific times and places; and (...) include one-time supporters of several different armed forces in the circles of their neighbours and kin.’ (James 2002:274).

In most African states in a situation of conflict, the state’s monopoly on violence and control over its territory (its internal sovereignty) cannot be taken for granted. Rebel movements may control parts of the country, or at least render state control impossible in some regions. Thus, in African countries, the state as a form of governance is itself contested (Munro 1996:118–120). In terms of the present study, this implies that, in order

to understand refugee mobilization, we have to question underlying assumptions of concepts like ‘state’ and ‘society’ and the relationship between these.

State Borders and Regional Dimensions of Conflict

Studying refugee mobilization in a neighbouring country of an ongoing conflict also makes visible the relative impact of state borders. This relates to the foregoing point concerning the relation between ‘state’ and ‘society’, but more specifically calls into question the relationship and interplay between state borders and identities. This question might also be a useful point of departure for understanding regional dimensions of conflict.

Studies of civil war and peacebuilding in Africa have often been limited to states, and focused on conflicts within borders. However, the government authorities in many African states are based in the capital and main centres, leaving border areas unstable and the state frontiers porous. This is often reinforced by the circumstance that many ethnic groups live on both sides of a border, and solidarity towards members of one’s own ethnic group may be stronger than towards the state, as noted by Prunier: ‘(..) a Kakwa is a Kakwa before being ‘Sudanese’, ‘Ugandan’ or ‘Congolese’.’ (Prunier 2004: 383).

The borderland between Uganda and Sudan is also inhabited by similar ethnic groups on both sides, with a history of migration and cross-border activities. This has led to a transnational borderland identity, according to Merks (2000), who also argues that refugee relief agencies should take these transnational identities into account (Merks 2000:1). Basically, he is saying that alternatives that are refugee-led and projects that are locally based would be more suitable for addressing the needs of refugees and migrants in this borderland. Merks also notes how the international refugee regime operates with the state boundary as the most important marker, whereas refugees and migrants in those areas might not necessarily relate to the border in the same way. The transnational way that refugees in my study related to return is indicative of this point. While the refugees prefer to go back and forth assessing the situation in Sudan over a period, perhaps setting up a house and splitting the household, moving back and forth – a strategy which may well prove the most rational and secure in their situation – such an approach is very difficult to incorporate in return programmes set up by the international refugee regime.

Processes related to identity boundaries can thereby challenge state boundaries. The interplay between state boundaries and identities is a topic which has been made visible and relevant in this study, and which should be further investigated.

State boundaries have traditionally been the starting point for scholars, with assumptions about a sovereign state acting as the sole legitimate wielder of force within its geographical frontier. In fact, this is an image that does not fit with reality. As stressed by Doom and Vlassenroot (1999:29), ‘None of these assumptions comes near to reality when dealing with Uganda and most of its neighbours. Although most of them are torn apart by civil wars or rebellions, often controlling only parts of the country, the regimes in place are simultaneously engaged in armed conflict across the border.’ This argument is also relevant in refugee studies, where crossing of state borders is the starting point of the study, but is seldom problematized or examined. When refugees are represented as victims only, this fails to acknowledge their history and political situation – and it is also a way of consolidating culture and politics within neat national geographical boundaries (Malkki 1995). In reality, refugees challenge the ‘national order of things’, and this should be an articulated part of refugee studies:

These relationships and processes occur in the context of a system of territorial national states. It is therefore useful to explicitly contextualize the study of refugees in this national order of things, instead of taking its order as a given to such an extent that it becomes invisible. (Malkki 1995b:516)

How internal conflicts in neighbouring states are interlinked in practice becomes particularly apparent when viewed through the perspective of refugees. This is one reason why a study of refugee roles in conflict can contribute to a better regional understanding of complex conflicts.

Concluding remarks

The dynamics of refugee mobilization involves three factors: the international refugee regime, the host state and the exile community. This becomes clear both when we analyse the factors separately and when we study the interplay among them. The contribution of the present study to the field lies in its incorporation of an examination of processes within the exile community as well.

Refugee mobilization is understood both through concepts of political opportunity structure and collective identity. Viewing these processes together has also enabled a more complex investigation of the phenomenon, whereby general assumptions about states and societies are challenged. Correctly understanding the dynamics of refugee mobilization

might therefore involve understandings of transnational identities, fluid state borders, state-like guerrilla movements and regional dimensions of conflict.

Concluding Remarks

This thesis has explored the phenomenon of refugee mobilization, seeking to go beyond the notion of refugees as either ‘victims’ or ‘warriors’. The exploration has shown refugee mobilization to be a complex phenomenon, and one which entails a range of challenges for the international refugee regime, for the host state and for the refugees themselves. The study has consequences for refugee protection, for understanding the role of refugees in conflict and conflict resolution, and thirdly for understanding the regional dimensions of conflict. In addition, the explorative nature of the study has contributed to a more nuanced understanding of refugees and of conflicts.

The complexity between refugees as warrior and as victims reflects the difficulty in drawing any clear distinction between political and military mobilization on the ground. This might indicate that one of the challenges of the international refugee regime is to address the problem of militarization of refugee camps more comprehensively, by including political solutions as well as the proposed military solutions. If military measures and security forces come to dominate refugee protection management, this might mean a development from rights-based protection to military-based protection. The findings of this thesis indicate that refugee protection should include political solutions as well.

It has been argued that humanitarian organizations should not address political issues, but remain neutral and impartial in order to be able to perform their primary tasks (see Terry 2002). Addressing the political questions and working for political solutions should rather be the responsibility of governments and international bodies.

It has often been repeated that donor governments use UNHCR as a shield. By sending UNHCR to the crisis area, governments claim to take action while avoiding political and military commitments to resolve the crisis. (Lischer 2003:106)

In this sense, the refugee protection might be said to be complex and difficult because of the working conditions and because of failure and lack of involvement from the rest of the international community. Nevertheless, it should be possible for the international refugee regime to improve refugee protection through a rights-based approach which would also include the right to (non-violent) political mobilization.

Secondly, deeper knowledge about refugee mobilization gives further knowledge about the roles of refugees in conflicts and in conflict resolution. Loescher (2003) has called for international involvement in relation to the role of forced displacement in

conflict and its duration. International policy responses are required that can recognize that refugees are a significant reason for conflicts (Loescher 2003:31). With this, Loescher is pointing to the role of refugees in conflict, and arguing that this should be made relevant in international approaches to conflicts. However, besides focusing on refugees as cause of conflict, I believe it is also important to ask how refugees can serve as a resource for conflict resolution. Further research is needed in order to answer both of these important questions.

The role of refugees in conflict and conflict resolution is an underlying topic of the thesis. One question to emerge from it is how refugee mobilization among Sudanese in Uganda will influence the implementation of the peace accord in Sudan. As explained in chapter five, political divisions in exile mirror political divisions within Sudan, and thereby some of the challenges of post-war Sudan. Furthermore, refugee mobilization may impact on refugee return and reintegration. Return and demobilization and reintegration programmes usually ignore the issue of refugee mobilization, and little is known about how refugee mobilization influences these processes. Also this is a topic in need of further investigation.

Another question along the same line relates to the role of refugees, or the diaspora in general, in conflict and peacebuilding. In peace negotiations and when new governments are formed, persons with a base in exile often play a central role, but little research has been conducted on this topic.

A third central issue to emerge from this study concerns the regional dimension of conflicts. A refugee focus enables us to challenge the assumption that civil wars are exclusively intrastate wars: they can be intertwined with conflicts involving neighbouring states, as in the case of Uganda and Sudan. LRA activities in Southern Sudan are now threatening the implementation of the peace agreement in Sudan, and have hindered refugee return to Sudan from Uganda, and created further displacement. Peace processes in Uganda are also affected by the situation in Sudan. All this indicates that the regional dimension should be incorporated into conflict resolution measures.

Furthermore, this study has shown how refugees are a heterogeneous group, where political, social and cultural differences influence mobilization. Refugees are often treated as a homogeneous group both in policy-making and in research, but differences within the exile community should be taken into account in refugee protection measures and refugee research. This study of political mobilization among Sudanese refugees in Uganda has shown that refugees are victims and warriors, and cause and consequence, of conflict. At

the same time we have seen that the exile community has political resources, resources that might prove important for post-conflict Sudan.

In general, the study also contributes to studies of complex crises and civil wars by not only examining the role of international actors and states, but also exploring differences and processes on the ground. The field of conflict research will gain a more comprehensive understanding of complex conflicts by incorporating understandings of social processes on the ground as well.

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All sources used in the thesis are included in this list.

This thesis consists of the total amount of 40 022 words.

Appendix I

Interview guide

Thematic list; Sudanese refugees in Uganda and the peace process in Sudan

The Peace Process

What do you think of the peace accord? Do you think the outcome is a good one?

What will the consequences be for you?

Do you feel that refugees have had a voice in the peace process?

How will the peace affect Sudanese refugees in Uganda?

Do you think the same is relevant for the IDPs in Sudan?

What do you think it will require for this to be a lasting, durable peace?

What will be the major challenges for the rebuilding of south Sudan?

How do you think governing the southern Sudan will be? How will you characterize John Garang and the SPLM. What are earlier experiences with the government of this leadership?

Do you think the south will gain strong independence from the north? As a result of the planned referendum? What is your opinion? why?

Return

Do think the choice of return will be a free choice? Will there be a possibility of not returning? Who do you think will return, and who will not?

If you want to return, how will you proceed? When will you decide? What are your considerations?

Who will you consult?

Where will you prefer to return to? Why?

If you don't want to return, why?

International refugee regime

Are you a refugee? What is a refugee? When are you a refugee, situations in which you are a refugee, situations in which you are not a refugee

What are the role and responsibilities of international organisation in relation to refugees?

What are the roles of refugees in the international organisations?

What are the rights and duties of a “refugee”?

How would you organise if international humanitarian organisations withdraw?

Host Country

How are refugees in general treated in Uganda? National law (Alien act)?

Can Sudanese refugees obtain Ugandan passport?

How is the relationship between Ugandan authorities and UNHCR and its implementing partners?

Describe the relationship Uganda- Sudan and Uganda -SPLM

Can you describe your relationship with Ugandan authorities? Both local, regional state level

Are there any differences between these levels?

How is the relationship with the local community? Trading at local markets? Education?

Do you speak the same language? Do you have ugandan friends or colleagues?

Sudanese Community

What is your position among sudanese in uganda in general?

What other kinds of organisations would you identify with/ cooperate with?

Do you belong to a community? Which? Why?

What does it mean to belong to a community?

When is community important? Examples of concrete situations?

How is the relationship between different Sudanese communities in Uganda?

Do you have contacts with Sudanese communities or organisations in Sudan? In Kenya? In other countries?

Describe the role of SPLM in Uganda

Organisation

The history of the organisation: when was it founded, why and how has it changed

What is the main purpose/objective for the organisation?

Can you describe the activities of the organisation? (What you do, who, when)

Are there any institutions you are trying to change/influence? (political leaders, other organisations, international organisation)

Are there any institutions which supports you? Morally or materially

Mobilisation

How do you recruit your members? Where? When?

Why do you think they are recruited?

Why do people continue to work in the organisation?

Why do they quit?

Strategy

How do you work to reach your objective?

How are strategy decisions made? Example?

How do you relate to violence? ex Support but not exercise? What kind of discussions have you had on this issue? Describe concrete situation

Personal Involvement

How did you become involved in the organization? When? Why?

What are your responsibilities? What is your position?

Why did and do you get involved?

What are your thoughts about the peace process? How is it affecting your life?

Interview Face Sheet

Date: Place: Contact/introduced by:

(Present myself and the project. Ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Do not feel obliged to answer to any questions, let me know if a question is inappropriate. Feel free to take a break)

Name:

Sex:

Age:

Residence:

Marital status:

Children:

 Residence of children:

Education (subject, level, place):

Profession/Occupation/ income generating activity:

Place of birth:

Language(s):

Mother tongue:

Tribe:

Refugee status:

Year of arrival in Uganda:

Coming from where:

Other places of refuge before Uganda:

Most important reasons for flight

Have you visited Sudan while in exile?

 Purpose of visit(s) ? Frequency of visits?

Are you planning to return to Sudan? Preferred place of return?

Map: Uganda



Map: UNHCR in Uganda



